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U.S. team tours Saudi bomb site

DUBAI (R) — A United States task force on Friday toured the devastated site of last month's truck bomb which killed 19 airmen in Saudi Arabia as part of a visit to assess the safety of U.S. troops in the region. Task force spokesman Colonel Richard Bridges said retired U.S. army General Wayne Downing, who heads the team, visited Khobar Towers military housing complex near Dhahran and interviewed U.S. airmen with knowledge of the incident. "We went immediately to the Khobar Towers," Col. Bridges told *Reuters* by telephone from Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia.

3 Israeli policemen arrested for beating Jordanian tourist

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Three Israeli border policemen have been arrested on suspicion of assaulting a Jordanian tourist, Israeli media reported Friday. The three appeared Thursday in the Jerusalem magistrates court, which extended their detention for five days, Israel Radio and television said. The tourist, aged 24, had come to Jerusalem to visit Palestinian relatives, after undergoing open heart surgery. He told the court the three stopped him on the street, punched him and kicked him. In his passport they scribbled abuse, calling him a liar and saying the passport was forged. They released him only when he opened his shirt and showed them the scar from his heart operation, Channel 1 and Channel 2 television said.

King to meet Assad before end of July

HM to hold talks with Ross

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein is expected to pay a visit to Syria before the end of July in a further effort to cement Jordanian-Syrian reconciliation and to brief President Hafez Al Assad on the outcome of talks Jordanian officials plan to hold with the Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu during his expected visit to Amman later this month.

An official source said that the King plans to meet with Mr. Netanyahu on July 25 in a bid to give momentum to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

Mr. Netanyahu was expected to visit the Kingdom on July 25 but his office announced Friday that Mr. Netanyahu has delayed his visit because of a Jewish holiday. No date had been set for Mr. Netanyahu's first visit to Jordan since his election victory on May 29, his office said.

King Hussein had met President Assad and discussed arrangements of his coming visit to Damascus at a side meeting during the Cairo Arab summit last month.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, who met in Cairo Tuesday with the Syrian foreign minister, was quoted as saying that the King's visit to Damascus will take place soon but did not name a date or go into details.

According to the same source, Mr. Kabariti, who left for London Thursday to join King Hussein on his working visit to the United Kingdom, will attend a meeting which the King will hold with U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross in the British capital ahead of Mr. Ross's new Middle East tour.

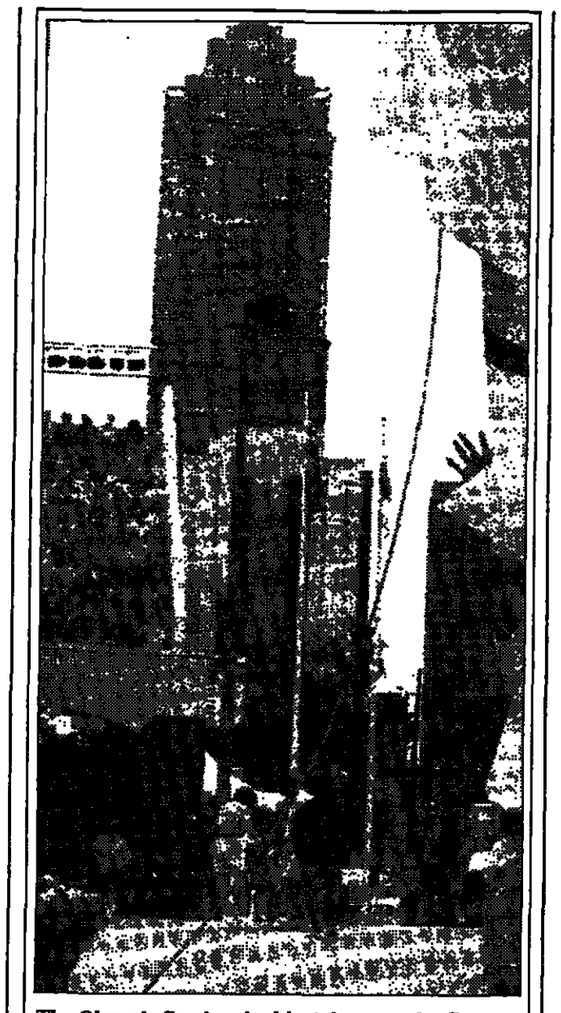
While in London, Mr. Kabariti is also expected to hold talks with British officials on Jordan's debts to Britain, according to the source.

Before leaving for London, Mr. Kabariti met in Amman Thursday with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), a leading member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and stressed that Jordan was firmly committed to supporting the pan-Arab stand with regard to the peace process.

He said the Kingdom was determined to pursue efforts for the continuation of the Arab-Israeli negotiations on all tracks for the attainment of a just and comprehensive peace.

Speaking on Jordan Television after the meeting, Mr. Abbas said that discussion with Mr. Kabariti covered the current diplomatic efforts in Cairo and Amman to give momentum to the peace process.

Describing Mr. Kabariti's visit in the past week to Tel Aviv and his meeting with Mr. Netanyahu as "very important," Mr. Abbas said that the PLO has started to hear a different tone from the Israeli government concerning the peace process, citing Mr. Netanyahu's announcement that his government was committed to implementing the Oslo deal with the Palestinians.



The Olympic flag is raised in Atlanta as the Centennial Olympic Games opened Friday with a record 197 countries taking part. ***See Olympic supplement inside*** **(Reuters photo)**

Mubarak: Arabs can do business with Netanyahu

Palestinians downplay results of Cairo meeting

CAIRO (Agencies) — In some of his most optimistic comments yet, President Hosni Mubarak declared Friday that Arab countries could reach peace with Israel's right-wing prime minister.

Mr. Mubarak said despite his own doubts, he found Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu to be "receptive to a great extent" during two hours of talks Thursday and was confident that Israel wanted to move ahead with the stalled Middle East peace process.

"Many were pessimistic and I was even fearful, but I found a lot of hope that peace could be achieved with the Likud leader," Mr. Mubarak said in an interview with Egyptian Television.

Mr. Netanyahu arrived in Egypt Thursday on his first visit to an Arab country as Israel's prime minister. He took no major steps to calm a region upset over his election victory two months ago, but took pains to praise his hosts and speak encouragingly about peace.

Arab countries have worried that Netanyahu's opposition to trading land Israel occupied in the 1967 war for peace would effectively end the Arab-Israeli negotiations. That formula has been the basis of talks that began in Madrid, Spain, in 1991.

Mr. Mubarak's remarks suggested that Egypt was keen on seeking a more conciliatory approach to Mr. Netanyahu's government.

"There will be difficulties at one time or another but I have a lot of hope that the peace process will continue because Netanyahu wants a solution to reach peace," Mr. Mubarak said.

He warned, however, that the Israeli leader's insistence on security could lead to delays and possibly even more violence.

"If we wait for the sake of security and then we search for peace, we will not reach a solution," Mr. Mubarak said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will travel to Egypt on Saturday to be briefed by Mr. Mubarak on the results of his talks with Mr. Netanyahu.

The brief visit lasting "several hours" will focus on the "developments in the peace process in the light of Netanyahu's visit," said the official news agency MENA.

Mr. Arafat's visit to Cairo was announced as senior Palestinian officials said they had yet to see Mr. Netanyahu soften his hardline stance despite upbeat comments by Mr. Mubarak.

Khaled Salam, an aide to Mr. Arafat, said Mr. Netanyahu spoke softly following his first official meeting with Mr. Mubarak on Thursday but gave no answers to any of the key questions crucial to Middle East peace-making.

"Netanyahu used a different language in Cairo from that which he used in front of the American Congress,

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. envoy to visit the region in bid to revive peace talks

By Lamis Andoni

BOSTON — Special U.S. envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross will shortly start a trip to the region to boost efforts spearheaded by Jordan and Egypt to break the stalemate in the Middle East peace process, well-informed American sources in Washington said.

American administration officials said that the U.S. had no desire to practice pressure on any of the parties involved but hopes that Jordan and Egypt will work out an arrangement with Israel to resume the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and maintain the process of normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab World.

The official believe that the stalemate in the peace talks should not be allowed to disrupt the normalisation process that could be slowed down by Arab governments in protest against the hardline policies of new Israeli government.

Mr. Ross told reporters on Thursday that the U.S. does not intend to impose any steps on any of the parties involved.

"We cannot impose peace, we can pursue it in a way that is designed to find possible pathways and to create openings if there is in fact the potential opening," he said.

Administration officials told the Jordan Times that an Israeli implementation of Oslo agreements should provide such an opening to move the stalled process but the U.S. thinks it is counterproductive to "exercise pressure on any party."

However, they said that the American administration thinks that the Arab parties involved, especially, Jordan and Egypt, are capable of reaching a breakthrough with Israel to move the peace process forward.

A week after the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu to Washington, American administration officials have concluded that the situation in Israel and the region would prompt the new Israeli government to adhere to the peace process despite its hardline rhetoric.

The American position is based on a view here that the widening gap between the Arab and Israeli positions regarding the future of the Arab territories that are still under Israeli control should not obstruct the normalisation process between the Arab World and Israel.

In this context, however, the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements, regardless of the differences between the two sides on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, are a prerequisite for keeping the process alive.

Therefore, administration officials concluded that the Israeli government should be judged by its policies on the ground and not by its slogans. They point out that the Israeli government has not taken any serious steps on the ground that could reverse the peace process.

"Netanyahu has said all the right things. We have to wait and see what direction he will take in the coming weeks," a source close to the administration said.

The American position reenforced views among Arab Americans that the U.S. was accommodating Mr. Netanyahu in spite of his hardline statements during his visit to Washington. But administration officials argue that they would be concerned about the Israeli prime ministers statements if they are accompanied by steps on the ground that could obstruct the peace process.

However, they say, if Mr. Netanyahu takes some positive moves such as easing the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, redeploy troops in Hebron and expand the redeployments in other areas of the West Bank, the peace process will pick up pace.

Officials denied that the American administration has asked Mr. Netanyahu to take specific steps, but they seemed confident that the Israeli government will make important moves in the next four to five weeks.

It appears, however, that Washington is concerned by two issues, the first is to get the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Lebanese back to the negotiating table and the second is for the Palestinian-Israeli talks to be resumed as soon as possible.

The American official view is that unless progress is made on the Israeli-Palestinian track, the peace process in its wider aspects of establishing economic, political and security cooperation between Israel and the Arab states will be stalled.

Thus, American officials say that they are confident that Mr. Netanyahu will eventually meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat if only because Israel will realise that an Israeli-Palestinian partnership is crucial to the continuity of the normalisation process with the Arab World.

They believe that Jordan and Egypt, the two parties capable of shoring up support for the peace process in the Arab World, will make it clear to Israel that peace in the region depends on restoring "Israeli-Palestinian partnership."

Consequently, the officials, who spoke to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity, said that the American administration will not take any direct move to step up the pace of the peace process.

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq wants swift action on U.N. food plan

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqis, hit by six years of crippling U.N. sanctions, were Friday pinning their hopes on a swift implementation of a U.N. oil-for-food deal after an amended plan to distribute humanitarian aid won U.N. approval.

On the financial markets, the Iraqi dinar rose slightly against the dollar with the news, trading Friday at 984 dinars to the greenback compared with 997 last week. Prices for certain food products also fell by 10 per cent.

The Iraqi dinar has been in freefall since the United Nations slapped oil and trade sanctions on Baghdad following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Before the invasion and seven-month occupation the dinar was worth 3.2 dollars.

But Iraqis were cautious Friday. "The prices have not fallen by much and the rates are unchanged. The approval of the Iraqi plan doesn't mean much for the moment since the sales of crude have not yet begun," said one Iraqi, Sahira Abul Rahman.

"We'll have to wait and see how the situation develops," she added.

Umm Abdullah said she thought "prices would fall a lot, but unfortunately that has not happened. The money just doesn't stretch that far and I couldn't buy anything."

Iraqi chief negotiator Abdul Amir Al Anbari told journalists at the United Nations in New York that U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali had formally approved the food distribution plan in a letter.

But he said further proce-

(Continued on page 7)

Kabariti: Lifting bread subsidies serves national interests

Compensation rules announced

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti has confirmed that the government will "rechannel" bread subsidies which will lead to a hike in bread prices, saying that he considers the decision a national responsibility which will serve the interests of the Kingdom.

President of the Dentists Union Said Abu Meizer, who was received by the prime minister along with a delegation representing professional unions, quoted Mr. Kabariti as promising an efficient mechanism for providing the people with the compensation for the hike in bread prices.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Supply announced how the government would apply the compensation for the lifting of the subsidy on bread. According to Minister of Supply Munir Sobar, who announced the application policy on Jordan Television on Thursday, the compensation would be as follows:

— Employees and pensioners of the public sector, military personnel and financial institutions will receive JD 1.28 added to their monthly salaries for every member registered in their family book.

— Beneficiaries of the National Aid Fund (NAF) will receive the whole cost of bread, a sum of JD 2.8 for each member of their family. There are around 40,000 families in this category.

— Holders of food coupons can obtain the subsidy through authorised banks three or four times a year by producing their family books.

— Persons who do not have food coupons can call at supply departments in various governorates to obtain bread coupons.

— Gazans living in Jordan and Palestine refugees who hold temporary passports can receive the subsidy from the supply departments.

Council maintains sanctions on Libya

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Sanctions imposed on Libya in connection with the 1988 Lockerbie air disaster were left unchanged on Friday after a Security Council review of the curbs, council members said.

The sanctions, which include an air embargo, a ban on arms sales and the downgrading of diplomatic relations, were imposed in 1992 because of Libya's refusal to extradite two men accused of planting a bomb aboard Pan Am Flight 103 which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

The sanctions against Libya, which the council reviews every 120 days, also penalise Tripoli for not cooperating in the investigation into the 1989 bombing of France's UTA Flight 772 over Niger which killed all 171 aboard.

U.S. pressures Bosnian Serbs to accept Karadzic's resignation

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States pressured Bosnian Serbs Friday to abide by an agreement ending the political career of their leader Radovan Karadzic, who is wanted for genocide in the 1992-1995 Bosnian war.

The administration of President Bill Clinton welcomed the resignation of Mr. Karadzic that was negotiated overnight by envoy Richard Holbrooke in talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leaders in Belgrade.

But U.S. officials cautioned they were looking for concrete signs that the three-point statement signed by Mr. Karadzic would be upheld as the Bosnian Serb Republic heads towards its first post-war elections on Sept. 14.

"We know that agreements are always important but implementing them is more important. We want to let them know that we will be watching," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We're not naive," one official said, speaking on condition he not be named. "We are not taking this piece of paper as a done deal."

The agreement that was faxed to Mr. Karadzic for signing following a 10-hour marathon negotiation called on the Bosnian Serb leader to relinquish his presidential powers and resign as president of the Serb Democratic Party (SDS).

It also prohibits him from appearing at public events, granting media interviews or running in the elections. The restrictions were aimed at curtailing Mr. Karadzic's influence in the campaign.

Mr. Burns underscored the importance of that provision and warned that any appearance by Mr. Karadzic would prompt international representatives to reconsider crossing out SDS candidates from the ballot.

That threat weighed heavily in the Bosnian Serbs' decision to agree to Mr. Karadzic's resignation, U.S. officials said.

It was the centrepiece of a strategy that consisted of targetting Mr. Karadzic's supporters and forcing them to distance themselves from their leader.

Under the Bosnia peace accord, indicted war criminals cannot hold public office and cannot stand in the elections.

Washington had also invested much effort in bringing Mr. Milosevic on board the drive to turn Mr. Karadzic into a pariah by holding out the promise of U.S. diplomatic recognition, foreign investment and reconstruction aid.

But a previous attempt by the international community in June had ended in failure, prompting scepticism here that despite the diplomatic breakthrough, compliance was not assured.

U.N. calls off inspection after Iraq refuses access, starts new inspection

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Inspectors Friday gave up trying to inspect a site suspected of concealing banned weapons after Iraqi officials defied Security Council demands and refused unconditional access to the facility.

But chief inspector Rolf Ekeus said team members remained in Baghdad and were beginning a new inspection as part of U.N. efforts to determine whether Iraq was complying with council orders to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

"We were blocked at all accesses to the facility we wanted to inspect," Mr. Ekeus told reporters after meeting with council president Alain Dejammet of France.

U.N. sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, described Iraq's action as a serious breach of the council resolutions which ended the 1991 Gulf war. They said the inspectors wanted to search the facility for "concealed weapons."

Last Tuesday, Iraqi guards blocked inspectors from the site, claiming the route passed through a "presidential area" forbidden to foreigners. The inspection was the first test of a an agreement signed by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz affirming the inspectors' right to "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted" access to all sites believed to conceal banned weapons.

On Thursday, Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoon said the dispute had been resolved and the team was escorted to the site but broke off its inspection after sundown.

But Mr. Ekeus and other U.N. officials said Mr. Hamdoon's account was untrue.

Under a 1991 council resolution, Iraq was required to destroy all its long-range missiles and halt its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes.

The inspectors must verify compliance before the council will lift economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But Mr. Ekeus says he doubts Iraq has complied. British Ambassador John Weston said Iraq's refusal to allow inspectors to enter all sites will serve only to delay the lifting of those sanctions. Despite Iraq's refusal, the United Nations is moving toward allowing the Iraqis to resume selling oil to buy food and medicine for its people.

The U.N. agreed in May to permit Iraq to sell $2 billion worth of oil every 180 days to buy humanitarian supplies. Iraq needed to draw up a distribution plan acceptable to the U.N. before the sales could begin.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali approved the distribution plan Thursday. A Security Council committee still needs to approve separate procedures for the exports, which could be finalised next week. Western diplomats have said Iraqi oil could begin flowing by the end of August.

The oil-for-food deal is an exemption to the economic sanctions and is designed to alleviate civilian suffering caused by the embargo.



Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein on Thursday, July 18 gave birth to a baby girl, an announcement by the Royal Court said. The announcement said His Majesty King Hussein named the newborn, the second child to the Princess and her husband Zeid Jumaa, Muna (Petra photo)

Dialogue to start on Cyprus military divide

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus will propose substantial reduction of military forces along the island's ceasefire line when talks brokered by U.S. envoy Madeleine Albright start between rival armies, a spokesman said on Friday.

"When we enter this dialogue the position of our side will be for substantial unmanning — not just a few metres," government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides told Cyprus Radio.

The meeting, the first between the military commanders of the Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish forces occupying northern Cyprus, was announced by Ms. Albright during a visit to the Mediterranean island on Thursday.

"Obviously we give this meeting the highest priority," said Peter Schmitz, senior political adviser in UNFICYP, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus.

"We want it sooner rather than later," he told Reuters.

The talks are a diplomatic breakthrough for Ms. Albright, Washington's ambassador to the United Nations, and could be a key step towards resolving the Cyprus impasse since Turkey's army invaded Cyprus on July 20, 1974 after a brief Greek coup engineered by the military junta in Athens.

Talk on reuniting the island as a bicommunal federation has been bandied about since then without any concrete result while both sides vigorously beefed up their defence capabilities.

"It's exciting news," said one diplomat. "The only thing still hanging in the air is the date of the meeting."

The leaders of the two armies will discuss technical ways to defuse tension between the two sides, heightened last month after a Greek Cypriot soldier was killed by a Turkish Cypriot.

Representing the Greek Cypriot side will be National Guard Commander Lieutenant General Nicolaos Vorvolakos, a mainland Greek, known for his comment on the soldier's killing last month: "A Turk is a Turk and will remain a Turk."

Opposite him will be General Hasan Kundakci, a Mainland turk, commander of the 30,000-strong Turkish forces occupying northern Cyprus, whom diplomats describe as a powerful figure in the breakway enclave who is actively involved in politics.

"The key to the U.S. success was actually getting Kundakci to propose himself as negotiator," said one diplomatic source insisting on anonymity. "There were disagreements among the Turkish Cypriots on this but he is a pretty powerful figure and I don't think he will back out of it now," the source said.

Bomb scare delays Iran Air flight

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — An Iran Air flight scheduled to leave Stockholm for Tehran was delayed for more than 10 hours due to a bomb threat, police said Friday. An unidentified man called the control tower at Stockholm's Arlanda Airport Thursday and said that a bomb was on board the plane, which had been scheduled to depart at 11:40 a.m. (0940 GMT) the same day. The plane was evacuated and searched after having been taken to a security zone at the airport. Bomb expeits found nothing and the plane took off around 10:00 p.m. (2000 GMT), police officer Mikael Ekman said.

According to police, this was the first time a Tehran-bound flight was the subject of a bomb threat. There were however "problems" with each weekly Iran Air flight, most often demonstrations, they said.

On May 30, Iran air received temporary authorisation from the Swedish government to fly the Tehran-Stockholm return route each Thursday. The authorisation is only valid until October 26, and Iran Air has not requested authorisation to fly the route after that date.

Santer threatens EU retaliation on U.S. anti-Iran law

ROME (AFP) — European Commission President Jacques Santer said Friday that Europe is ready to act against U.S. law punishing foreign companies investing in the oil and gas industries in Iran and Libya.

In an interview with Italian daily La Repubblica, Mr. Santer said he would tell U.S. administration officials that the Europeans "do not understand how they can harm the interests of its allies in order to strike at those of its enemies."

"The American claim to legislate in extra-territorial matters is unacceptable," Mr. Santer said.

"We will react against the d'Amato law which concerns Iran and Libya as we have against Helms-Burton," he said, referring to another U.S. law which aims to penalise non-U.S. companies operating in Cuba.

The U.S. Senate earlier this week voted in favour of the Iran oil sanctions act and an amendment, proposed by Republican Senator Alfonse d'Amato and Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy, to toughen sanctions against Libya.

The bill has to be reconciled with a similar version passed by the House of Representatives and signed by President Bill Clinton in order to become law.

"This new law creates an even graver problem because 20 per cent of our oil imports come from Iran and Libya," Mr. Santer said.

In 1994, EU nations imported 483 millions tonnes of crude oil, of which 48 million came from Iran and 51 million for Libya.

"Laws like the one under discussion in the United States are quite unacceptable for us" and will have serious consequences for countries such as Germany and Italy, among the main oil importers, Mr. Santer said.

Mr. Santer said he was still concerned with the Helms-Burton law, despite Mr. Clinton's decision this week to put a six-month hold on lawsuits against foreign companies doing business in Cuba.

"The law remains, with its extra-territorial character. As a consequence ... we are in the process of preparing instruments to defend our interests."

Israelis unhappy with Netanyahu on economy

TEL AVIV (R) — An opinion poll published on Friday showed most Israelis are unhappy with their new Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's handling of the economy.

Fifty-five per cent of 515 Israeli Jews surveyed told a Gallup poll for the newspaper Maariv they were dissatisfied, 23 per cent were satisfied, and 22 per cent did not know.

The Tel Aviv stock exchange had fallen more than 20 per cent in the seven weeks since Mr. Netanyahu's election before rising nearly four per cent on Thursday.

Traders said that after Mr. Netanyahu's announced budget cuts for 1997 and plans for widescale privatisation, positive news on the peace front was needed to spark a rally.

The poll showed Israelis overall as divided as they were on the day of Mr. Netanyahu's election on May 29 over what direction their country should take.

Thirty-eight per cent thought the hardline 46-year-old Likud Party leader was taking the country in the right direction, 37 per cent disagreed and 25 per cent were undecided.

Mr. Netanyahu defeated Nobel Peace laureate Shimon Peres in the election by fewer than 30,000 votes, or less than a percentage point. The survey published on Friday had a four per cent margin of error.

U.S. troops remain a target in Saudi — Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq warned Friday that U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia would be the target of future attacks such as the bombing of a U.S. housing complex in which 19 servicemen were killed.

"It is clear to everyone that the Saudi opposition which rejects the U.S. occupation in Nadj and Hijaz is so well organised that it can strike its goals where ever they may be on Saudi soil," the Iraqi daily Al Thawra wrote.

In an editorial headlined "The protection forces need protection themselves" the paper, which is the mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Party, slammed the presence of U.S. troops in the Gulf state.

"The time has come for the American forces, deployed in Saudi Arabia to protect the Al Saud (reigning family) and the oil wells to find shelter to defend themselves from the Saudis opposed to their presence," Al Thawra said.

On Wednesday President Saddam Hussein said that allowing U.S. troops to be stationed in the Gulf would bring down a "curse from God."

Some 24 U.S. troops have been killed in two attacks in Saudi Arabia, the Al Khobar bombing on June 25 which left 19 dead and a bombing on U.S. training offices in Riyadh in November in which five U.S. soldiers perished.

U.S. troops have been deployed in the oil-rich kingdom since the Gulf war to drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait after Baghdad's August 1990 invasion.

CONDOLENCES

The Ghandour family and relatives and in-laws in Jordan and Lebanon and abroad mourn the death of

Ismail Ghandour

Father of Ali, Ibrahim, Hilmi and Yousef Ghandour, who passed away Thursday morning in Lebanon
His body was laid to rest Friday in Beirut.

May God bless his soul

Date and venue for offering condolences will be announced after the return of family members from Beirut to Amman.

P.O.Box 3371,
Amman - 11181
Fax 962-6-687451

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO
15:00 Moomin
15:30 Pumpkin Patch
15:45 Big Brother Jake
16:10 Olympics
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
19:25 Olympic Games
22:00 News in English
22:20 Olympic Games
01:40 Varieties
02:25 Olympic Games

PRAYER TIMES
04:07 Fajr
05:38 (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 Dhuhr
16:22 'Asr
19:46 Maghreb
21:17 'Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunication Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terrasancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Jihad Samnour 765018
Dr. Ghalib Zawaydeh ... 736011
Dr. Bilal Al Sayyid 890280
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour 666873
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeissani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ... 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Reparis 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mnasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtaiined on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00 Damascus (RJ)
10:20 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
11:05 Colombo (RJ)
15:10 Istanbul (RJ)
15:45 New York, Amsterdam(RJ)
17:20 Cairo (RJ)
19:15 London, Berlin (RJ)
20:40 Vienna (RJ)
02:50 Madrid (RJ)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights
13:40 Muscat, Doha (GF)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
19:35 Amsterdam (KL)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
21:15 London (BA)
22:00 Sanaa (IY)
22:35 Larnaca (CY)
23:55 London (KJ)
03:00 Kuwait (KL)
03:00 Rome (AZ)
03:30 Antalia (TK)
06:30 Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 Aqaba (QAIA — proceeds to Marka airport at 10:00 a.m.) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:35 Beirut (RJ)
09:45 Istanbul (RJ)
12:00 Vienna (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:10 Paris (RJ)
13:15 Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
14:05 London (RJ)
21:10 Larnaca (RJ)
21:10 Riyadh (RJ)
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:00 Dhahran (add) (RJ)
22:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
08:45 Beirut (ME)
14:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:30 Riyadh (SV)
16:00 Vienna (OS)
20:45 Kuwait (KL)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
23:00 Sanaa (IY)
23:30 Larnaca (CY)
23:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
04:00 Amsterdam (KL)
04:00 Rome (AZ)
04:30 Antalia (TK)
06:40 London (KJ)
07:25 Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
20:30 Aqaba (RW)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apricot	850/500
Apple	700/500
Banana	600/600
Banana (mukhammar)	520/520
Banana (imported)	800/600
Cabbage	290/180
Carrot	130/80
Cauliflower	230/140
Cucumber (large)	130/80
Cucumber (small)	220/130
Eggplant	190/140
Garlic	650/400
Lemon	630/400
Marrow (large)	250/150
Marrow (small)	440/250
Mulukhiah	120/80
Onion (dry)	130/80
Okra	700/500
Orange	400/300
Plumb	350/250
Pea	500/300
Peach	670/400
Pepper (hot)	300/200
Pepper (sweet)	300/200
Potato	350/220
String Bean	500/300
Sweet melon	200/120

Home

Princess

Human

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan was among countries worldwide taking part in launch of the Human Development Report, an annual publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which examines people-centred development in countries, a UNDP statement said.

This year's edition, the seventh in the series, was released in Washington by its chief author Richard Jolly, special advisor to the UNDP administrator, to an audience of high-level government officials and UNDP representatives, and

Princess Sumaya certificates to

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hussein on Thursday attended the graduation ceremony at Princess Sumaya University College for Technology (PSUCT), and handed certificates to graduates of the computer department.

Addressing the 82 graduates, Princess Sumaya said that the college has become a distinguished university particularly in the field of computer science.

She added that since its foundation, the college has made use of the experience of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and "it is launching a new specialization

JERASH FESTIVAL

- Concert by UAE singer Mohammed Al Nabhan at South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Concert by Moroccan Wajdah Bennis at Artimes Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Recital of Lebanese folklore by Fairouz Al Damour band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- Performance by the Jordanian Royal Ballet Band, Aqaba Band for Popular Arts, the Nile Band for Popular Arts, Popular Art, and the Qatari National Band at the main theatre on Thursday at 8:30 p.m.
- Children's play entitled "Rabat" by Al Hakawati at Gracia Theatre at 7:30 p.m.
- Performance by Polish soprano Ewa Podles at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.
- Poetry recital by Ahmad Hijazi, Ali Al Jundi, Mohamamd Abu Dunah, Mohamad Omar Farra, Suleiman Oweiss, at Artimes Theatre (7:00 p.m. - 9:00

Jordan, Visiting er

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Armenia Thursday signed a protocol on establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries at the ambassadorial level.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha and Armenian government representative David Ohannessian signed the protocol at the Foreign Ministry in Amman.

The agreement, the first document to be signed by the two countries, provides for the establishment of diplomatic relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

The protocol calls on both sides to promote their cooperation and friendly relations and to seek the implementation of the principles and objectives of the United Nations as well as contributing to world peace and security.

In an interview with the Jordan Times after signing the protocol, Dr. Ohannessian said: "This protocol is the cornerstone of the future relations between Armenia and Jordan."

"We hope to have active political coordination with Jordan in international fields and exchange of

Princess Basma to launch UNDP's Human Development Report

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan was among 20 countries worldwide taking part in the launch of the Human Development Report, an annual publication issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which examines people-centred development in over 100 countries, a UNDP statement said.

This year's edition, the seventh in the series, was released in Tokyo Wednesday by its chief author, Richard Jolly, special advisor to the UNDP administrator, to an audience of high-level government officials, senior UNDP representatives, and the media, the statement said.

The 1996 report will be officially launched in Jordan by HRH Princess Basma, at a ceremony scheduled on Aug. 4, after which it will be made available to the public, according to the statement. Princess Basma, who was appointed honorary ambassador to the UNDP in 1993 for her work in gender, child, and rural development, also released last year's report which focused on gender discrepancies.

The Human Development Report is perhaps best known for its Human Development Index (HDI) which ranks countries through an innovative basket of socio-economic indicators to measure qualities of life such as life expectancy, level of education, and adjusted real income.

Drawing on the emphasis of the global report of people's capabilities, Jordan will be launching its own report next year, the statement said.

The national report, to be coordinated by the Ministry of Planning, will highlight the factors that affect — negatively and positively — Jordan's ranking in the global (HDI), it said.

A 14-member advisory committee of prominent Jordanian citizens has been appointed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf-Huneidi, to work closely with a team of researchers in compiling this report, the statement said.

46% of students pass Tawjihi



Minister of Education Munther Masri (centre) Friday addresses the press and announces results of 1996 General Secondary Certificate Examination (Tawjihi) examination (Petra photo)

AMMAN (PETRA) — Minister of Education Munther Masri on Friday announced that of all the students who sat for the 1996 General Secondary Certificate Examination (Tawjihi) 46 per cent passed their examinations.

Speaking at a press conference held Friday at the Ministry to release results of the Tawjihi examination, Dr. Masri said students in the scientific stream had the highest rate of passing scores at 63.6 per cent, followed by the nursing stream with 60.9 per cent and the hotel education stream with 60.1 per cent.

In the literary stream only 38 per cent of the students passed: their rate of success was the lowest recorded this year.

The agricultural stream had a 38.5 per cent pass rate, the vocational stream 49 per cent and the commercial stream 41.6 per cent.

A total of 96,880 students sat for this year's examination: 52561 students in the literary stream, 26,509 in the scientific stream, 6,550 in the commercial stream, 3,799 in the agricultural stream, 5,207 in the industrial stream, 1,715 in the nursing stream and 569 in the hotel education stream.

Dr. Masri said that 20,000 students are expected to be admitted to state and private universities and community colleges for the fall semester.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday congratulated the students who succeeded and recommended that those who failed consider vocational training and called on such training institutions to focus their curricula on vocations which would fill gaps in the job market.

"These institutions have a common responsibility to ensure that the students have sufficient information about the range of trades that are available to them to help them choose what is useful and suitable for them and to enlighten them on the local labour market's demand," said the Crown Prince.

He also appealed to the public to refrain from firing weapons in celebration of the success of their children as has been the custom in some areas noting that too often tragedies occur as a result of stray bullets in such rejoicings.

Princess Sumaya hands certificates to graduates

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan on Thursday attended the graduation ceremony at Princess Sumaya University College For Technology (PSUCT), and handed certificates to graduates of the computer department.

Addressing the 82 graduates, Princess Sumaya said that the college has become a distinguished university particularly in the field of computer science.

she added that since its foundation, the college made use of the experience of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and " it is launching a new specialisation, namely electronic engineering drawing on the long experience of the RSS."

The Princess noted that the college was in the process of awarding scholarships to excelling graduates.Princess Sumaya valued the efforts undertaken by RSS and its staff for providing distinguished services to the Jordanian society.

Dean Mohammad Qaryouti addressed the ceremony and revealed that the college had signed an agreement with the Illinois University for exchange of teaching staff, students and educational materials .

Philadelphia U. graduates class of '96

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's Philadelphia University Thursday celebrated the graduation of its second class of students, this year numbering 145 graduatesfrom the university's engineering, pharmaceutical, arts, sciences, law and administrative science schools.

Delivering the key note address was HRH Ghida Talal, a strong advocate of improving the quality of education throughout Jordan's academics institutions.

In her address, Princess Ghida called on the graduates to develop an appreciation for books and for reading that goes beyond the mandatory memorisation that all students need to do when preparing for an exam. She gave her own love for books as an example of how the graduates can also learn to treat books as lifelong friends and partners, instead of just dry educational tools. "We must learn," she old her audience, "to elevate our appreciation of books, be they the treasures of the great Greek philosopher Plato, or the unforgettable and touching stories of European writers such as Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, or the masterpieces of our great Arab and Islamic tradition, including Ibn Khaldun and Al Jahith."

Guest speaker and renowned Iraqi historian Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Duri addressed Philadelphia University's graduating class, and Philadelphia University President Dr. Fouad Al Shaikh also delivered a message to the students.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Concert by UAE singer Mohammad Al Mazin at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
* Concert by Moroccan Wajdah Band of Andalusian Songs at Artimes Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
* Recital of Lebanese folkfore poetry of Zaghlol Al Damour band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
* Performance by the Jordanian Armed Forces Musical Band, Aqaba Band for Popular Art, Kafranjah Youth Centre, the Nile Band for Popular Art, the Ramtha Band for Popular Art, and the Qatari National Band of Popular Art at the main theatre on Thursday and Friday at 6;30 p.m.
* Children's play entitled "Rabab and the Lost Necklace" on at Gracia Theatre at 7:30 p.m.
* Performance by Polish soprano Urszula Kryger at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.
* Poetry recital by Ahmad Hijazi, Habib Al Zayoudi, Ali Allaq, Mohamamd Abu Dunah, Al Munsif Mazghani, Omar Farra, Suleiman Oweiss, and Nayef Abu Obeid at Artimes Theatre (7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.).

LECTURE

* "Views on the Future of Jerusalem" (Arabic) by Ali Rafi' from Jerusalem at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m. .

EXHIBITIONS

* Muslims in Britain exhibition at the British Council, until July 24.
* Exhibition of works by Sudanese artist Rashid Diab entitled "The Time of Silence" at Darat Al Funoun, Jabal Weibedh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until July 31
* Black and White paintings exhibition of works conducted in half a century (1913-1966) entitled "Heureaux Dimanche" at the French Cultural Centre, until July 20.
* Ceramics exhibition at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until July 25.

Deputies to take up draft laws in extraordinary session

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN (J.T.) — Parliament, which went into summer recess on April 2, will convene in an extraordinary session today to discuss several draft laws covering various issues including legislation governing the Jordan Radio and TV Corporation, the Jordan News Agency (Petra), the Jordan Press Association, higher education, the revised penal code, customs and taxes, and the Jordan Agricultural Union.

Also, it will discuss draft laws on the Centre for Studies on Freedoms, Democracy and Human Rights, copyrights, the organisation of state-owned property and its investment, the Jordan Artists Association, censorship and circulation of audio- visual productions, illegal acquisition of funds, the provisional law on personal statutes, and the revised provisional personal statute law, as well as issues concerning public freedoms and rights of citizens.

According to Jordan Television, the parliament was summoned for the extraordinary session by a Royal Decree issued on Monday.

Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Srour said 47 deputies had requested the convening of the session.

Mr. Srour dismissed reports that a new elections draft law and a fiscal budget supplement draft law will be discussed during this session.

Parliamentary sources expected the session to last two months.

Court acquits Al Bilad publisher

By a Jordan Times Staff reporter

AMMAN — The state security court has acquitted the publisher of Al Bilad weekly, Nayef Tawara, who was charged with possessing $100,000 in counterfeit bank notes last May, saying that the evidence presented by the prosecution was insufficient to convict him.

The facts of the case as presented by the prosecutor general were that an envelope, containing counterfeit bank notes, was found in the car of the accused at the time of his arrest by security officers. Mr. Tawara was driving through Wasfi Tel Street when he was pulled over and arrested by police.

The defence insisted that Mr. Tawara was innocent of the charge of conscious possession of counterfeit bank notes.

In the verdict, Judge Yousef Faouri said the prosecution failed to prove the accused was guilty beyond reasonable doubt. He added that the prosecution's evidence was not substantive and was built on doudt and probability.

According to Judge Faouri, Mr. Tawara was ignorant as to the contents of the sealed envelope found in his car at the time of the arrest, and finally that there was no substantial evidence that the accused had the intention of taking possession of the envelope's contents

According to the defence, the prosecution was unable to determine how the envelope containing the counterfeit notes found its way into Mr. Tawara's vehicle.

The defence's argument was that an Iraqi citizen named Jassem Obeidi met the accused in Wasfi Tel Street and dropped the envelope in Mr. Tawara's car. The defence maintained that their client did not know the contents of the envelope and that furthermore he was heading to a police station to report the incident.

Jordan, Armenia sign protocol to establish diplomatic ties

Visiting envoy says building relations with Arab countries is a priority

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Armenia Thursday signed a protocol on establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries at the ambassadorial level.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha and Armenian government representative David Ohannessian signed the protocol at the Foreign Ministry in Amman.

The agreement, the first document to be signed by the two countries, provides for the establishment of diplomatic relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistance, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

The protocol calls on both sides to promote their cooperation and friendly relations and to seek the implementation of the principles and objectives of the United Nations as well as contributing to world peace and security.

In an interview with the Jordan Times after signing the protocol, Dr. Ohannessian said: "This protocol is the cornerstone of the future relations between Armenia and Jordan."

"We hope to have active political coordination, with Jordan in international fields and exchange of ideas. This is very important in any relationship between two countries," Dr. Ohannessian added.

The Armenian representative voiced hope that the two countries would sign agreements on elimination of double taxation, investment protection, and trade and cultural cooperation.

During the 40-minute meeting prior to the signing of the protocol. the Armenian envoy extended an invitation from Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazian to his Jordanian counterpart to visit Armenia, the date of which will be set later.

Mr. Madadha also extended an invitation to his Armenian counterpart to visit Jordan to discuss strengthening bilateral relations.

"During the meeting we informed the minister and the Jordanian officials on Armenia's total support of the Jordanian-Israeli Peace treaty and Jordan's efforts in implementing and strengthening the peace accord," Dr. Ohannessian said.

"We on our part asked our Jordanian counterparts to approach to all issues dealing with Armenia in Arab, Islamic and international fora objectively."

"One of the most important priorities of Armenian foreign policy is to build close relations with brotherly Arab countries," the Armenian envoy said. "And in this regard, Jordan, being a model of stability in the region and a major contributor towards the achievement of peace in the area enjoys Armenia's highest regard and support."

The Armenian envoy said that he hoped that before the end of this year a Jordanian trade delegation will visit Armenia to have first-hand information on Armenian industry, visit factories and industrial sites and study the possibility of bilateral trade cooperation.

"It is my conviction that Armenia and Jordan have the possibility in promoting relations in all fields," Dr. Ohannessian said. "Armenia is an advanced country with heavy industry. We have over a thousand factories which have good quality products. We export to eastern and western Europe as well as the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. We are eager to have similar trade relations with Jordan."

"Of the former Soviet republics Armenia is the only country that has recorded a rise in exports last year and in the past six months of this year Armenia recorded another 7.5 percent rise in exports," the envoy noted.



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha (right) and Armenian government representative David Ohannesssian Thursday sign a protocol for the establishment of diplomatic ties between Jordan and Armenia at the ambassadorial level (Petra photo).

Speaking about the recent military agreement between Turkey and Israel the Armenian envoy voiced agreement with the region's Arab opinion that the Turkish-Israeli military accord is becoming a cause for instability in the region. "We have no right to interfere in other countries' affairs but considering the recent events, this military agreement at least does not contribute to the stability of the region."

Discussing the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, Dr. Ohannessian regretted the fact that in this part of the world this issue is presented as a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"Our position, which is accepted by the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), is that the conflict is between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan, Dr. Ohannessian said. "Armenia has no territorial demands from Azerbaijan. We are not seeking to unite with Karabakh."

"There are two international legal principles. One is sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and the other is the principle of self determination. Unfortunately these principles sometimes clash with each other," the Armenian envoy added.

Over 70 per cent of the population of Nagorno Karabakh is Armenian, and Armenia has supported the idea of self-determination for the people of the mountainous region ceded to Azerbaijan in 1923 by the government of the Soviet Union.

According to international law, a referendum was organised and with almost total support Nagorno Karabakh was declared independent. "Of course this independence is not recognised by the international community, Dr. Ohannessian said. "But Karabakh has an elected parliament, a government and a president, Robert Kocharian, who holds official meetings with other countries."

"Let me make one thing clear. Armenia in only interested in the most important issue and that is the security of the Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh," the envoy said. "Armenians are a nation that has been the victim of a genocide. Therefore the security of the Armenian people comes at the top of our priorities."

OSCE's Minsk group has been working to resolve the Karabakh conflict and Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the representatives of Nagorno Karabakh have taken an active role in the discussions that bore fruit two years ago when all parties agreed to a ceasefire that has been in force ever since.

The Minsk group is continuing these discussions in order to bring a lasting peace to the area.

"In our view, positive result means that the international community give acceptable security guarantees for the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh," Dr. Ohannessian said. "The final political status of Nagorno Karabakh can only be discussed after those guarantees are safeguarded."

"When international peacekeeping forces arrive and guarantee the security of the region, we can move to discussions on the final political status of Nagorno Karabakh. Until then it is unrealistic to think about it."

The Armenian envoy stressed the importance of peaceful and normal relations with all the neighbouring countries.

"I am optimistic that all our outstanding problems with our neighbours can be resolved peacefully," Dr. Ohannesssian said. "All the problems we inherited from the past, we intend to resolve them with dialogue and in peaceful ways."

300 civilians killed as Hutu rebels use 'human shields'

GITEGA, Burundi (AFP) — More than 300 civilians from Burundi's Hutu majority were killed during army offensives at the end of June in the country's central Gitega province, local sources stated Friday.

The sources said the civilians, including women, children and the elderly, died during operations against Hutu rebels by troops of the regular army dominated by the central African nation's Tutsi minority.

Soldiers reported that civilians have been used as human shields by the rebels, and that some innocent people died in the attacks.

Military sources on the ground said that operations had been carried out against rebels who had attacked and killed soldiers.

The army began scouring the hillsides for rebel forces on June 25. The civilian population had not evacuated the area, and many were killed in the bombardments and strafing that followed. Locals said that at least 100, were killed, but others put the figure as high as 200.

"I saw the graves of 67 people," said one inhabitant of Giheta, referring to an army operation launched in the Kabanga region.

In the wake of the offensive, Hutu rebels launched a bloody attack on a tea factory in Teza (north-east of Bujumbura) on July 3 in which 98 Tutsis were reported killed. Journalists present reported that women and children were among the dead.

One soldier admitted that civilians had died in the army operations, but said: "When the population makes it known that it is held hostage by the rebels and gets away from them, the treatment is different. There is no damage."

On Thursday a U.N. special rapporteur said a disaster was brewing in Burundi where the number of victims killed by inter-ethnic fighting is increasing by the thousand.



Two little boys watch soldiers guarding Prime Minister Nduwayo who had come to Bukeye to address the local population. High level talks involving U.S. and African diplomats began in Arusha, Tanzania, to try and push forward a plan for military intervention which is aimed at averting a full-scale genocide in Burundi (Reuter photo)

"There were hundreds of people dying before April, there are now thousands," Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, of Brazil, told a press conference in Geneva following a tour of the troubled country.

He added that as many as 800 to 1,000 people were dying at times within a one- or two-day period.

"The situation could escalate at any moment, suddenly causing a humanitarian disaster without precedent in the Great Lakes region," he warned.

Mr. Pinheiro, who completed a 17-day mission Wednesday, said civilians, mainly women, children and the elderly, were bearing the brunt of the fighting and a catastrophe "is in the making" in the central African country.

"The army is losing control of the activities of its soldiers on the ground and is fighting rebels or armed groups, whose repeated attacks in most of the country are causing heavy casualties," he said.

In the capital Bujurumba, the Burundi authorities Friday prevented the former president, Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, from participating in a demonstration against the sending of foreign troops to the country and calling for a change of government. "The authorities are afraid of what I might say," said the ex-president, overthrown by a coup in 1987.

Some 2,000 people took part in the banned demonstration, assembling near Bagaza's residence.

Meanwhile Thursday in Tanzania, former President Julius Nyerere held talks in Dar Es Salaam with international representatives on a plan to send African troops to Burundi, but no statement was issued after their meeting.

Sources close to Mr. Nyerere, who has been chairing talks between Burundi's political parties, said discussion centred on how the international community could help in bringing peace to the tiny central African nation.

The regional force was requested by Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and Tutsi Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo at a regional summit in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha on June 25.

Mr. Ntibantunganya and Mr. Nduwayo, who told the summit they were unable to contain the violence, were accused of treachery when they returned from Arusha, prompting them both to step back from the plan.

Tanzanian Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete has denied accusations that Dar Es Salaam was backing Hutu extremists in Burundi.

"The fighting is within Burundi and suspicions in Burundi that Tanzania has been arming and training one of the rebel factions there is baseless," said Mr. Kikwete Thursday.

The rebels have never launched any attacks in Burundi from Tanzanian territory, he added.



Burmese opposition leader and 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at the mausoleum of her father and Burma's national hero, late General Aung San, for a wreath-laying ceremony in Rangoon Friday. Ms. Suu Kyi attended the government organised Martyr's Day celebration for the second time after she was released from house arrest more than a year ago (Reuter photo)

Burma attacks Suu Kyi over sanctions; ASEAN unmoved

JAKARTA (R) — Burma's military government attacked democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Friday for echoing calls in Europe for economic sanctions against Rangoon as South East Asian nations seem determined to play down the issue.

In Jakarta, diplomats from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) said they would not be swayed by Western pressure against admitting Burma as an observer to the group at its annual foreign ministers' meeting which opens Saturday.

"It's been overplayed to the extent that it's the only thing people are interested in... We really can't understand it," said one senior ASEAN diplomat. "There's no reason for us to say 'hey, you can't be an observer.'"

The seven-member ASEAN has come under renewed pressure to take a public stand at its upcoming two-day meeting against the Burmese junta's crackdown on Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), which has been condemned by Western countries.

But diplomats said ASEAN, which includes some of Rangoon's closest economic partners, was likely to maintain that Burma's political problems were an internal affair.

In Rangoon, an editorial in the state-run New Light Of Myanmar (Burma) newspaper said Ms. Suu Kyi and the NLD had caused "mischief" by urging economic sanctions on the country, coinciding with similar calls in Europe.

"They would rather let their fellow citizens suffer when they should be encouraging foreigners to do business here," the editorial said.

Ms. Suu Kyi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, called for sanctions to be imposed to force political change on Rangoon. She made the appeal in a video sent to members of the European Parliament and made public Thursday.

In the French city of Strasbourg, Euro-MPs passed a non-binding resolution urging the EU to end all trade, tourism and investment links with Burma.

To date the EU has held off imposing sanctions, with many in the 15-nation bloc arguing that they would be meaningless without similar moves from other Asian nations.

Any debate over Burma in Jakarta is likely to come at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which follows the ministerial meeting next week. The forum, set up two years ago to promote peace, security and stability in the region, includes the United States, the European Union, China, Japan.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the European Union are expected to raise the Burma issue, although it appeared unlikely they would press for sanctions.

Burmese Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw, also in Jakarta, said call for sanctions came about because of differing perceptions in Asia and the West on human rights.

"There is no need for sanctions against us for all that is happening in our country," he told reporters.

Japanese Foreign Ministry officials refused to comment on the issue Friday but diplomatic sources said they doubted if Tokyo would take any lead in pushing for sanctions.

They pointed to the start this week of direct flights between Japan and Burma, a decision that was cleared by the Japanese government.

Australia said it would bring up the issue at the ARF.

"This will be a good opportunity for (Foreign Affairs Minister) Alexander Downer to lay squarely on the table our concerns about the reluctance of Burma's ruling party to engage in dialogue with the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi," a foreign affairs spokesman told reporters in Canberra.

In Rangoon, Ms. Suu Kyi made no comment on the issue when she appeared at an official Martyr's Day ceremony.

In Bangkok, Thai and Burmese students protested in front of the Indonesian embassy against the ASEAN stand on Burma.

ASEAN groups Indonesia, malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Diana, Fergie arrive in French Riviera

CANNES, France (R) — Princess Diana and the Duchess of York arrived with their children for a divorcees' holiday in the French Riviera. 48 hours after the start of proceedings in Princess Diana's divorce from Prince Charles. Their private jet touched down at Cannes-Mandelieu Airport and the party, including Princess Diana's two sons Prince William, 14, second in line to the British throne, and Prince Harry, 11, were swept away in a convoy of two saloon cars and a minibus. Local officials said the holidaymakers would stay at a picturesque hunting lodge near the hilltop town of Fayence above the Riviera. The lodge is believed to belong to the duchess' former boyfriend Paddy McNally. The two women should have plenty to talk about.

Brazil's smokers defy new anti-smoking law

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil's new federal law banning smoking in public areas went up in smoke only a day after going into effect. People continued to light up freely on buses, in restaurants and bars in spite of the law, which bans smoking in enclosed public areas except in specially designated zones for smokers. Even lawmakers defied their own rules, and cigarette smoke filled congressional chambers in Brasilia. "There are far more important things for the government to worry about," said psychologist Maria Angelica, enjoying a cigarette over lunch in a Rio restaurant. "The law won't be applied in practice anyway, as always in Brazil."

University of Toronto plans chair on suicide

TORONTO (R) — A Canadian woman's sorrow at the 1992 suicide of her son has led to the creation of North America's first chair for suicide studies at the University of Toronto. Doris Sommer-Rotenberg of Toronto launched a campaign to fund the chair after her 36-year-old son Arthur killed himself. "After Arthur's death, I immediately felt I wished to honour him because he was such a brilliant young man," Ms. Sommer-Rotenberg said. She said she approached the University of Toronto which promised to help endow a chair if she raised one million Canadian dollars ($730,000). "We collected more than a million dollars and the University of Toronto matched it with another million," she said.

Ministers seek soft ride in British parliament

LONDON (R) — A wrongly-directed letter exposed a Dodge used by British government ministers to get a soft ride when they answer questions in parliament. Parliamentary aide Simon Coombs slipped up when he wrote to all members of the ruling Conservatives scheduled to put questions to his ministerial master, Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang, inviting them to a meeting at the ministry. The letter, which described the meeting as "an opportunity to ensure that the resultant exchanges are, as far as possible, beneficial to all concerned," was also accidentally sent to opposition Labour member, Harry Barnes. Such meetings are held by most ministers, with party officials sometimes producing suggested words for friendly members of parliament to parrot, praising the government's achievements or rubbishing opposition policies. Mr. Barnes attended the meeting, but later told parliament he refused to discuss with Mr. Lang what he should say to parliament. "I have not rehearsed this (supplementary) question in the meeting I had," he said, amid laughter.

Tamil rebels say over 500 Sri Lankan troops killed

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Tiger rebels said Friday they killed more than 500 Sri Lankan soldiers when they attacked an army camp in the northeast in one of their most daring raids on government troops in the 13-year-old ethnic war.

The rebel mouthpiece Voice of Tigers Radio said the pre-dawn attack Thursday on the army's north-eastern Mullaitivu Camp, 280 kilometres from Colombo, left 40 guerrillas dead.

An army spokesman confirmed that part of the sprawling camp was overrun by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) but said government troops were putting up stiff resistance.

"Part of the camp has been overrun," the spokesman told Reuters. "There are small groups (of defenders) scattered in various places of the camp."

He said army reinforcements sent by helicopters Thursday to assist had not yet linked up with the besieged soldiers, estimated to be about a thousand when the attack began.

He gave no estimates of the death toll.

Military officials said privately that rebel communications they had monitored put the figure at over 400 troops killed.

They said clear casualty figures were not available yet as the base had lost radio contact with the outside world.

Tiger radio, monitored in the government-controlled northern frontline town of Vavuniya, said fighting was continuing between government troops within the camp and the reinforcements and the LTTE guerrillas.

An LTTE statement Friday said: "The LTTE forces after taking control of the central military complex, have removed three armoured vehicles and large quantities of heavy weapons including two 122 mm artilleries."

"Sri Lankan Armed Forces suffered heavy casualties and a large number of them have died," the statement added.

The Defence Ministry said in a statement Thursday that the troops manning the base had inflicted heavy losses on the Tigers with the help of air and naval forces.

"Troops launched counter-attacks on the attacking terrorists causing heavy casualties among (them)," it said.

Helicopters landed army Special Forces near the base to reinforce the besieged survivors. They were unable to land at the base to evacuate the wounded because of rebel mortar, machinegun and small arms fire, military officials said.

The navy, which sent eight Dvora-class gunboats to the area from the eastern port of Trincomalee, south of Mullaitivu, sank a large Tiger boat with 14 rebels on board, naval sources said.

One sailor was killed and at least four were wounded when rebel boats retaliated, they said.

The Defence Ministry said air force planes had destroyed seven rebel boats.

Tiger rebels also launched a separate attack in the northeastern Meegasgodella area, killing eight soldiers in an ambush on a patrol Thursday, military officials said.

The latest attacks come a week before the 13th anniversary of islandwide anti-Tamil riots that sparked the ethnic conflict in which the government says more than 50,000 people have died.

Rwanda says 17 rebels, 2 soldiers killed in clash

KIGALI (R) — Rwanda's army has killed 17 Hutu rebels in the troubled north-western region of Gisenyi bordering Zaire, state radio said Friday.

The radio said two soldiers were also killed and three wounded in gunbattles between the army and the rebels Tuesday near Nyamyumba and Kayove villages.

Troops seized grenades, mines, machetes and ammunition after the fighting, the radio said.

It quoted Major John Murissa, army commander Gisenyi region, as complaining about the lack of cooperation between his troops and the predominantly Hutu residents of the border area who view the Tutsi-dominated army with suspicion.

A captured ex-soldier of the former Hutu government army was quoted as saying the rebels were training in camps in eastern Zaire. A million Hutus, including the former army, fled there in fear of revenge for 1994's genocide of up to one million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The pace of a nearly two-year-old guerrilla war between the new army and Hutu rebels is accelerating. It has spread to areas close to the capital Kigali, where at least 34 people have been killed since the end of June.

U.N. human rights reports show at least 150 people have been killed in Rwanda since mid-June in attacks blamed both on the army and the rebels. The dead include a Hutu mayor, a Hutu prosecutor and at least 46 genocide survivors.

Western diplomats say the army is clamping down in border areas and killing Hutu civilians in reprisal for rebel attacks on Tutsi genocide survivors.

U.N. officials say the crackdown is accompanied by mass arrests by the army, adding to the 78,000 Hutu genocide suspects jammed into overcrowded jails — up from 18,000 early in 1995.

U.S. Senate defies veto threat, approves defence bill

WASHINGTON (R) — Defying a veto threat from President Bill Clinton's advisers, the Senate Thursday approved a $245 billion defence appropriation bill — $10 billion more than Mr. Clinton wants.

The Senate approved the bill 72-27. House-Senate negotiators must now work out a compromise with a House of Representatives version that also appropriates $10 billion more than Mr. Clinton asked.

The White House warned Congress that Mr. Clinton's advisers would recommend that he veto the final bill if it is not cut.

"With the nation facing serious budget constraints ...this bill is not affordable," the White House said in a statement.

But Republicans vowed when they took control of Congress last year that they would reverse Clinton defence cuts they said jeopardised U.S. fighting preparedness.

Either Mr. Clinton and Congress will have to reach a compromise or U.S. defence programmes will have to be added to a "continuing resolution" later in the year that will continue funding for all federal programmes whose annual appropriations have not been signed into law.

3 held by British anti-terror squad

BIRMINGHAM, England (R) — Two men and a woman have been arrested in the central English city of Birmingham as part of an operation against the Irish Republican Army, police said Friday.

Police said a number of documents, but no bomb-making equipment, was seized as result of information received after other arrests in London on July 15.

Police in London arrested seven suspected IRA men on that occasion, seizing enough components for 36 bombs.

Police said the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which broke a 17-month truce in February with a series of bombs in London, was planning to attack public utilities in and around the capital.

A statement Friday from the West Midlands Police said: "As a result of arrests made in London on July 15, further enquiries were made and two people were arrested in Birmingham Monday under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

"A further arrest under the PTA was made Wednesday in Birmingham. All three people are detained in the West Midlands pending further enquries.

"As a result of documents recovered at the time of the arrests, we are cooperating closely with the (London) Metropolitan Police. No bomb-making equipment was found."

Police described Monday's raids in London as a "significant success in our struggle against Irish Republican Army terrorism."

All those arrested in London and Birmingham were being held Friday under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which is normally used to counter guerrilla activities linked to the Northern Ireland conflict.

The IRA, fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, ended its ceasefire in protest at what it saw as British intransigence in the peace process.

In February police found vast amounts of bomb-making material at the home of an IRA guerrilla who killed himself with his own bomb on a London bus.

The IRA have planted seven bombs in Britain since February including a truck bomb which blew up a shopping centre in Manchester in June.



Residents of a flooded Dhaka suburb move about in a boat trying to collect drinking water. Many wells have been submerged by the week long floods causing a serious shortage of clean water (Reuter Photo)

Bangladesh flood death toll reaches 23

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed has ordered airdrops of relief supplies into flood-ravaged areas as the unofficial death toll rose to 23, the press reported here Friday.

Officials said army and air force helicopters would be used to airdrop rice, biscuits, powdered milk, molasses and medicine to thousands of people left marooned in their flooded homes or on embankments in the north and north-west of the country.

Army and paramilitary Bangladesh rifles troops have been deployed to carry out aid operations in some of the areas worst hit by the flooding, caused by heavy monsoon rains and run-off from the hills in neighbouring India.

With ten more fatalities reported Friday, press reports put the unofficial death toll as 23 in 48 days. No official figures were available.

During a tour of affected areas Thursday, Sheikh Hasina announced one-million-taka ($23,809) emergency aid packages would be given to Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur and Kurigram districts, amid reports of shortages of food and drinking water there threaten an outbreak of disease.

Flood officials said the situation in nine northern and northwestern districts was deteriorating, with fresh areas being submerged and five major rivers — the Dharla, Bramhaputra, Ganges, Karotoa and Surma — threatening to burst their banks.

A government spokesman warned regions in the south could be affected as flood waters empty into the Bay of Bengal.

This marks the second round of flooding since June and low-lying areas of the capital Dhaka have been inundated.

Communications were down in some areas as roads and culverts were washed away by the floods.

An official from northern Kurigram district told AFP by telephone that some 655,000 people there had been affected by the latest deluges, with crops wiped out and large numbers of homes damaged.

Main opposition leader Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party is scheduled to leave Dhaka Friday for a tour of the affected areas.

Bangladesh, criss-crossed by some 230 rivers, is plagued by annual floods.

Russian police hunt three Caucasians after failed bomb attempt in Voronezh

MOSCOW (AFP) — Police thwarted a major bomb blast in the southern Russian city of Voronezh Friday when they found two bags containing three kilogrammes (6.6 pounds) of TNT at the city's main railway station, news reports said.

Prosecutor Yuri Gorshenev told ITAR-TASS news agency that police were hunting for three suspects believed to be from the Caucasus.

The attempted bombing, which experts said could have destroyed the whole building, came a week after two consecutive bombings on trolley-buses in Moscow which injured 33 people.

Witnesses said they saw two women and a man leave the two bags in the waiting room of Voronezh Station and then hurry away from the scene.

"Witnesses said they were speaking with a strong Caucasus accent," said Mr. Gorshenev, adding that "the latest details, including their appearance, point to Caucasians."

Security forces issued identikits of the suspected bombers and began passport checks, sealing off the city's airport, railway stations and bus terminal.

"The criminals acted brazenly, hoping that the explosion would bury all the witnesses," Mr. Gorshenev said.

Interfax News Agency quoted local Police Chief Viktor Troynin as saying a disaster had been averted "by pure chance," since one of the detonators had worked but failed to trigger an explosion.

He ruled out any involvement by local criminal groups in the attempted bombing, but did not elaborate.

The station in Voronezh, an industrial city 480 kilometres south of Moscow, is Russia's main railway hub for the south of the country.

One device containing 1.5 kilogrammes of TNT was left in an ordinary cloth bag in the main station's waiting-room.

The detonator activated at 0200 GMT but it only scattered the explosives nearby, civil defence workers told Interfax.

When police came to the scene they found another 1.5 kilogrammes of TNT planted in a plastic bag nearby.

Despite allegations that Chechens may have had a hand in both Moscow trolley-bus attacks the authorities had not provided any hard evidence Friday to suggest that the series of bombings were linked.

Voronezh prosecutor Victor Borodayenko told ITAR-TASS that a group of Federal Security Service (FSB) investigators left Moscow for Voronezh to probe the incident and determine whether it was linked to the trolley-bus bombings.

Late Thursday a jeep belonging to a commercial company was wrecked in a powerful blast in Moscow's northeastern district of Sokolniki, ITAR-TASS news agency reported. There were no casualties.

After the Moscow trolley-bus bombings Mayor Yuri Luzhkov called for a crackdown on the "diaspora" in the city — a term used for ethnic minorities including Chechens.

The bombings coincided with a major Russian military offensive against separatists in Chechenya.

China floods kill 716, strand 4 million

BEIJING (R) — The number of people killed in devastating floods across eight provinces of south and central China had reached 716, with two million forced to leave their homes, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said Friday.

Nearly four million people had been cut off by flood waters, 810,000 homes had collapsed and 2.8 million homes had been damaged, the ministry said in a statement giving details of natural disasters in China in the first half of 1996.

The total death toll from all such disasters, including earthquakes, hailstorms, floods and drought in the period was 1,875, with total economic losses of 71 billion yuan ($8.55 billion) and 200 million people affected, it said.

The farmland area affected by the floods since mid-June had reached 9.6 million hectares (23.712 million acres), of which the crops on 1.04 million hectares (2.569 million acres) had been lost, the statement said. It gave no crop breakdown.

It put total economic losses from the floods at nearly 40 billion yuan ($4.819 billion).

The eight provinces and regions affected are Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui, Guizhou, Guangxi and Jiangsu, the statement said. It gave figures as of July 18.

Worst hit by the floods was the southwest province of Guizhou, where 252 people were killed, 250,000 were forced to leave their homes and 69,000 homes collapsed.

A total of 6,120 companies in the province were hit by the floods, with 1,300 forced to stop production, 348 school buildings collapsed and there were total economic losses of 9.8 billion yuan, it said.

In the neighbouring province of Guangxi, 67 people had been killed by the floods and 299 injured, with 3,000 livestock killed and total economic losses of 2.5 billion yuan, it said.

Japan sees China as growing military challenge

TOKYO (R) — Japan has downgraded Russia as a security threat and upgraded its "watch" on China in its annual white paper on defence issued Friday.

The report, which looks at the state of Japan's armed forces and the security situation for the coming year, clearly spelt out once again that the relationship with the United States was the cornerstone of Japan's peace and prosperity.

The most significant change from last year's white paper was the addition of a paragraph that clearly signalled China was going to need more attention from Japan's Self Defence Forces.

The paper said Chinese military spending grew 11 per cent in 1996, the eighth year in a row that it had gone up by more than ten per cent.

It repeated a paragraph from the 1995 report which said China's military modernisation was expected to proceed gradually in view of prioritisation Beijing was giving to economic development.

But then, a new paragraph was added, reading: "The situation must be watched with caution in terms of promotion of nuclear weapons and modernisation of the navy and air forces, expansion of naval activity and heightened tension in the Taiwan Strait as seen in the military drill near Taiwan."

It was the first time a white paper had said China needed to be "watched."

In contrast, the paper's references to Russia painted a picture of a country where instability made it difficult to determine what needed to be watched.

"With regard to future developments in the Russian Far East, in view of the instability and the fluid situation in Russia there is a lack of clarity for the future outlook of Russia and its forces in the Russian far east," the paper said.

Communist North Korea, as in past years, was again singled out as a "serious source of instability" because of its suspected nuclear weapons development and modernisation of its missile capacity.

There was no question about instability or commitment in Japan's relationship with the United States despite some public calls for American military bases to be shut.

"The Japan-United States security arrangements are not only indispensable to Japan's security in an unpredictable and uncertain international situation lacking transparency, but also for forming the basis for a wide range of friendly bilateral relations, including political and economic relations," it said.

The paper skirted the controversy about the presence of U.S. bases on Japan's southern island of Okinawa where a non-binding referendum will be held on Sept. 8 on whether the facilities should be closed.

Hawks drown out doves as Chechen war escalates

MOSCOW (AFP) — Amid atrocities, massive Russian air raids and threats of all-out war, commanders on both sides in the Chechenya conflict have vowed to pursue the military option, drowning out the voices of moderates.

For more than a week the Russian army and air force have been pounding villages in southern Chechenya, killing combatants and civilians indiscriminately, with the tacit approval of the authorities in Moscow.

According to witnesses, Russian soldiers were also responsible for a massacre of 13 Chechen civilians near the capital Grozny Monday.

The general staff announced Friday that three Russian soldiers were killed and a helicopter attacked by separatist rebels in southern Chechenya, Interfax News Agency reported.

The helicopter was fired at Thursday near the village of Shatoi and one soldier was seriously wounded, the military said.

In all, Chechen rebels attacked positions held by Russian federal troops 26 times during the night Thursday, according to the report. The local army command stated that seven of the attacks occurred in the capital Grozny.

Meanwhile, Salman Raduyev, a hardline Chechen rebel field commander who had earlier been reported killed, dramatically reappeared Thursday vowing to "fight until the end" against the Russian forces that rolled into Chechenya in December 1994 to crush the separatist movement.

All the ingredients are there for a new escalation of the conflict, which has already cost some 40,000 lives, most of them civilians.

By bombarding Chechen villages with overwhelming firepower Russian forces were largely responsible for the breakdown of a fragile ceasefire which had held for nearly six weeks.

Most observers concur that the Russian commanders in Chechnya took advantage of the state of political limbo in Moscow as President Boris Yeltsin recuperated from his gruelling election campaign and a new government was awaited.

The Chechen separatist command responded fairly moderately Thursday, saying it would treat each case separately without launching any large-scale operations in order to try to salvage the truce.

But only hours later Commander Raduyev struck a different tone, rejecting negotiations with Moscow and promising a large-scale rebel response.

Commander Raduyev staged a mass hostage-taking in January in the Russian Republic of Dagestan bordering the Republic of Chechenya and in March the Russians said he had been killed in an ambush by unidentifed gunmen.

In an interview broadcast on NTV television, Commander Raduyev wore dark glasses and appeared to have undergone reconstructive surgery on his nose.

He said he underwent surgery at a hospital outside Russia and used his period of convalescence to buy weapons including shoulder-held Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

Commander Raduyev said separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, also given up for dead, was still alive.

Russia and the Chechens had both said Mr. Dudayev was killed in Chechenya on April 21. The Russians said he died in an attack with air-to-surface missiles that homed in on his satellite telephone.

Commander Raduyev's claim threatened to undermine the authority of the current Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, regarded as more moderate, who succeeded Mr. Dudayev.

A senior Russian negotiator, Stepan Stepashin, Friday exploited Commander Raduyev's surprise appearance to point to "uncontrollable" elements in the rebel camp, and said that was "one of the biggest problems" hindering peace in Chechenya.

In any case the latest flare-up in Chechenya threatens to bury hopes for peace in the near future.

The rebels had been counting on Russia's new national security chief Alexander Lebed to push the peace process forward.

Gen. Lebed, an Afghan war veteran and now secretary of the powerful Security Council, earlier pledged to resolve the conflict peacefully.

But a long-awaited visit by Gen. Lebed to Chechenya has been postponed repeatedly and Gen. Lebed himself has been very restrained about the recent upsurge in fighting.

Previously he had harshly criticised the Russian military involvement in Chechenya.

Russian Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov, who heads Moscow's negotiating team, said Friday he was still ready to resume peace talks but implicitly endorsed the Russian offensive.

Tim Guldimann, the OSCE's chief representative in Chechenya, voiced disappointment with the collapse of peace moves.

"I thought the peace process would be long and difficult, but I did not think it would be so difficult, even before discussing the political issues," Mr. Guldimann admitted Thursday.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) brokered peace talks held in May and June, when both sides agreed to postpone discussion of Chechenya's future political status.

Three Russian soldiers were killed and a helicopter attacked by separatist rebels in southern Chechenya, the general staff announced Friday, according to Interfax.

The helicopter was fired at Thursday near the village of Chatoi and one soldier was seriously wounded, the military said.

In all, Chechen rebels attacked positions held by Russian federal troops 26 times during the night Thursday, according to the report. The local army command stated that seven of the attacks occurred in the capital Grozny.

Meanwhile a top Russian official Friday dismissed claims that Dudayev was alive.

But no sooner had he spoken than the Federal Security Service renewed speculation surrounding the fate of the rebel leader by saying that it could not confirm his death.

Commander Raduyev told the news conference: "I swear to Allah that Dzhokhar Dudayev is alive."

But Mr. Stepashin said Dudayev was definitely dead. "I will not swear on the Koran but I can state with 100 per cent certainty that Dzhokhar Dudayev is not alive," he told a news conference.

Commander Raduyev said Dudayev was in a poor condition and had ordered an all-out war against Russia to avenge the attempt on his life.

"Russia will yet pay for this attack," he said.



A Russian soldier guards captured Chechen rebels as they fly in a helicopter from Vedensky region, the site of a military operation, to Grozny. Russian troops, battling separatist guerrillas in the southern Chechen region, have been given a mandate by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to use force to keep the peace process on track (Reuter photo)

Former wartime sex slaves appeal to Japan court

TOKYO (R) — Two Chinese women forced to provide sexual services to the Japanese army during World War II made their first court appearance Friday and told of the brutality they experienced as "comfort women."

"All I could do was cry. I had no sexual experience before," Li Xiumei told the court in tears.

Ms. Li said she was 15 when four Japanese soldiers barged into her house and dragged her away before her mother to where the soldiers were stationed.

Ms. Li's mother later committed suicide while Ms. Li was confined in a cave for five months, raped by the soldiers all day and night. Ms. Li lost the vision in her right eye and has difficulty walking, disabilities she said were caused by the violent assaults by the soldiers.

Liu Mianhuan said she was forced to serve nearly 10 Japanese soldiers every day with her only food a bowl of corn broth twice a day. In the evening she was raped all night by a man she called the "red-faced commander" of the unit.

Even after Ms. Liu escaped from the brothel, no one in her village wanted to marry her, and she had lived the next 50 years in shame, never revealing the truth until recently.

"I want the Japanese people to know that the Japanese soldiers looted everything, burnt everything and killed everyone," Ms. Liu said.

The two women are among a group of six Chinese women who filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government in August 1995 demanding 20 million yen ($185,000) in damages and a public apology. In December 1991, 35 Korean women launched a similar suit.

Friday's hearing was the first time any of the women had testified on what they had suffered.

The suits challenge the Japanese government's contention that the issue of compensation to war victims ended with treaties normalising ties with Asian neighbours.

Instead, the government set up a "private" Asia Women's Fund, which is still wrangling over the amount to pay the estimated 300 surviving Asian women forced to work in the brothels.

The fund managers are expected to agree to payments of 2 million yen ($18,500) as one-time compensation, aside from the government's plan to provide 700 million yen ($6.48 million) as medical and welfare aid.

But many of the former sex slaves have said they will refuse the payments because they want direct compensation from the Japanese government.

They also want a letter from Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto acknowledging the government's "moral responsibility" over the issue.

In June, Mr. Hashimoto said he would make a "heartfelt apology" for the victims but did not say it would include accepting responsibility.

A news report Friday said Mr. Hashimoto would accept such responsibility in his letter, but the prime minister's office would not confirm the report.

The letter is to accompany the compensation paid by the private fund.

After decades of denials, the Japanese government acknowledged in 1992 that it operated wartime brothels with conscripted foreign women.

But in the trial, the government argued that there was no need to either acknowledge or deny the existence of wartime brothels as the trial was a legal issue about wartime compensation.

For the victims, however, the case goes beyond the dry legal technicalities.

"If the Japanese government isn't going to admit (there were comfort women), then please kill me," Ms. Liu said after her appearance in court.



Two Chinese women, Li Xiumei (left) and Liu Mianhuan, forced to provide sexual services to the Japanese army during World War II, talk to reporters in Tokyo after they made their first court appearance Friday (Reuter photo)

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Image and moments of truth

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's image among his Arab "partners in peace" seems to have undergone some change since his election on May 29, but especially most recently, after his talks in Cairo with President Hosni Mubarak and the visit of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti a couple of days earlier.

The initial reaction to Netanyahu's election in the Arab world generally was one of apprehension, bordering on fear, that the whole Middle East peace process would collapse if the Israeli leader pursued his declared policies. But following Netanyahu's visit to Egypt, President Mubarak sounded upbeat, at least in comparison to the scepticism that he shared with most Arab and other world leaders in early June and later. After a mini-summit with His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Aqaba in the first week of June and another with President Hafez Assad of Syria and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, Mubarak was so concerned about the election results in Israel that he felt the need to convene the Arab summit in Cairo and played a crucial role in the wordings of its final communique which gave a strong, if rather subtle, warning to the Likud leader. That message from the summit and the subsequent messages coming from Amman, Damascus and Washington must have had their effect on the new Israeli government.

The reluctance of some Arab and Islamic countries that had established some sort of diplomatic relations with Israel to upgrade those ties had also its impact on the Israeli leader. King Hassan of Morocco, for example, made it a condition that Netanyahu meet Arafat before the Moroccan leader could see Netanyahu. Jordan, which enjoys the warmest kind of peace that any Arab country has with Israel, also made clear that it was unhappy at the way the new Israeli leadership was pronouncing itself on the peace effort. Prime Minister Kabariti stated clearly last week that Jordan was dismayed that the Likud government seemed to be "emptying the process from its basic content," which is the land for peace formula.

Against this background, it was little wonder that the Egyptian president found Netanyahu "receptive to a great extent" to ideas Mubarak floated at the meeting. It is indeed reassuring that Mubarak could find "a lot of hope that peace could be achieved with the Likud leader."

It is now up to the Israeli leader to build on the change in image perceptions to move the peace forward.

Following his upcoming visit to Jordan, the new Israeli prime minister should be ready and willing to meet with Arafat and start once again engaging the Syrians.

Only if Israel is willing to continue along the path of compromise, based on international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions, can real peace and security be found.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has an opportunity to explain his government's position during his visit to Egypt and later to Jordan and to show whether he is truly inclined towards peace or not, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i. In his speeches before the Knesset, Mr. Netanyahu proved to be a hardliner and a person difficult to deal with, but his visits to Amman and Cairo will put him to real test, said the writer. Jordan has already expressed its deep concern over Mr. Netanyahu's recent statements that he does not believe in the exchange of peace for land formula because such a stand tends to undermine the peace process which was initiated basically on this formula and on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions, said the writer. The prime minister's visits to Tel Aviv and Cairo and his talks with the Egyptian, Syrian and Israeli government leaders were dedicated to reactivate the peace process, he added. Netanyahu can by no means secure good ties with Israel's neighbours, warned the writer, unless he is committed to implementing the accords which the former Israeli government had concluded in the course of establishing a comprehensive and lasting peace.

TAHER ADWAN, a writer for Al Dustour, expressed the view that the Arab public is not convinced that Israelis are truly committed to reaching a lasting peace with the Arabs, saying that Mr. Netanyahu's visit to Arab states cannot prove otherwise. The Israeli premier's visits to Cairo and Amman will shed more light on the man's intentions, but the talks are not expected to change the Israeli government's stand vis-à-vis the occupied Arab lands, he said. What the Arabs should do now is direct their attention to bolstering bridges between their countries and re-establishing solidarity in the true sense and they have to remember Mr. Netanyahu's words in Washington that Israel does not fear the Arabs who keep issuing threats but fail to do anything at all to force Israel to budge from its stand. The writer said that the Arabs should realise that Israel's reversal of its policies from peace to war should be met with equal and more forceful, collective Arab position that would force Mr. Netanyahu's government to shift back to the right track that leads to peace.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Netanyahu projects positive image in Cairo

IT WAS very befitting for the Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu to choose Cairo as his first open visit to an Arab country. His political advisors in Washington recommended that he pay greater "respect" to Egypt's self-proclaimed role in the region. Moreover, President Mubarak had always hoped and dreamt to achieve one of his major diplomatic goals by negotiating an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty which would guarantee a return of the Golan Heights. The best item on Mubarak's agenda was a finalisation of a Palestinian-Israeli peace treaty in 1999, which would guarantee the return of Muslim holy places to Arab sovereignty.

Many observers felt happy few days ago at Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's reassuring statements when he met Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and emphasised Israel's continued commitment to peace in the Middle East.

Many thoughtful Arabs had earlier, on May 30, a tremendous shock following the Israelis election results. But many of us were mollified by what we heard in Cairo, compared to the statements we had listened to, when Netanyahu had his speech in Washington a week ago.

In Cairo, his speech was methodical, moderate and straight forward. He promised to carry on with the peace process, to collaborate with Jordan and Cairo, to meet and to reach a settlement with Arafat whose three attempts to phone and meet Netanyahu earlier were rejected.

Reports from Cairo indicate that the old image of a populist, militants right-winger Netanyahu was replaced by a moderate, sound, conservative statesman who is willing to lift closure on the West Bank and Gaza to allow ten thousand Palestinians to resume work inside Israel. He was very impressive when he conveyed the all important message to the Arabs that he is not neglecting the Syrian point of view which Mubarak had been hammering in for hours. Mubarak had earlier committed himself to represent Syria's Assad in any future contacts with the Israelis.

It is true that Netanyahu's interpretation of "land for peace" is different from what the Syrians want, a total withdrawal from the Golan Heights, without any demilitarised zones or monitoring stations, or stationing of international troops. Yet the optimistic tone that came from Cairo indicates that more positive results might be expected when Jordan receives the Israeli prime minister this week.

Though Netanyahu is expected to emphasise the thorny problems of security and settlements, he is expected to act responsibly, not to rock the boat, and to announce his commitment to adhere to Oslo agreements.

But one issue remains to be solved. It is the Jerusalem questions. Hundreds of handshakes can not create durable peace between Arabs and Israelis as long as the custodianship of Al Aqsa Mosque is in non-Muslim hands.

The continued occupation of Muslim holy places is an open invitation to fundamentalist terrorism to recreate what it had earlier done in Beirut, in Tel Aviv and Khabor. It is of great interest that one leader of holy violence, Saudi Ben Laden, speaks from Afghanistan how his militias will never drop their arms as long as Jerusalem is in "Zionist Custodianship". Moreover, Iran's Al Quds (Jerusalem) Battalions are the ones training Bahrainis, Lebanese and Palestinians in all sorts of guerrilla warfare and explosives. The rallying cry for all observant Muslims has been Jerusalem since 1967.

To shelve its discussion for few years, to the final status negotiations with the Palestinians, is just a temporary first-aid sedative that will never cure Muslims of the deeply ingrained attachment to their holy city.

It is the hope that Mr. Netanyahu in Jordan might send another positive signal to both the Syrians and to the Muslims.

A troop redeployment in Hebron might serve as a good starter to reestablish some kind of good faith that the new Israeli cabinet is not totally ruled by the two super-hawks, Gen. Ariel Sharon and Gen. Rafi Eitan.

Ulster: Wait for 2037

By Gwynne Dyer

"I'VE TOLD them that if they don't do this right they can shag off," said former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds before the Irish Republican Army (IRA) declared a ceasefire in September 1994. "They can detour away for another 25 years of killing and being killed — for what? Because at the end of that 25 years, they'll be back where they are right now, with damn all to show for it."

Well, they did not do it right. The IRA, impatient with the pace and direction of the peace talks on Northern Ireland, resumed hostilities last February with a massive bomb in London. Further bombs followed in English cities, though the ceasefire held in Northern Ireland itself until this month.

Now it is back to business as usual in Ulster too, with a car bomb in Enniskillen, three policemen shot by snipers and two civilians dead and 230 injured in a week of political violence. Reinforcements have raised the British military presence in the province to the highest level since 1984 — and Northern Ireland is well-started on its next 25 years of killing.

So what went wrong? And how bad is it going to get?

Not all that bad, really, at least not compared to the recent horrors in Bosnia and Liberia. Over 3,000 people have been killed in political violence in Northern Ireland, a province with only one and a half million people, in the past quarter-century. But the rate of killings peaked way back in 1972, when 467 people died.

The average annual death toll in Ulster over the past decade has been only 88, no worse than the murder rate in the average American city of the same size. In Northern Ireland people also had to put up with check-points and random searches and a high background level of fear, but most could get on with their lives reasonably close to those who live in other parts of Western Europe. Northern Ireland is going back to some cataclysm that will keep it in the headlines. Is this an unmitigated disaster? Not really, since an attempted peace settlement, rather than chronic low-level terrorism, is the likeliest trigger for "Armageddon."

The majority of the Northern Irish population is Protestant who feel themselves to be British, not Irish, and vote to stay in the United Kingdom every time they get the chance. The minority are Catholics, most of whom identify strongly with the Catholic-majority Republic of Ireland that takes the rest of the island.

Only four per cent of the Protestants, when last asked in the 1991 census, wanted a united Ireland. Only 35 per cent of Catholics, in the same survey, wanted to stay in Britain. No compromise can bridge this gap.

Since the Protestants are the majority — two-thirds of the population at the start of the "troubles" in 1969, and still 58 per cent today despite much Protestant emigration and a higher Catholic birth-rate — Catholic "nationalists" who are committed to unification have to abandon democratic politics and resort to violence.

Not all Catholics support the IRA, but Sinn Fein, its political front, got over 15 per cent of the vote in the May elections for the (now all but aborted) peace talks. Almost one Catholic in three, therefore, implicitly supports the use of violence to coerce Protestants into a united Ireland.

An even higher proportion of Protestants, in all likelihood, supports the use of violence to stop that happening. And the Protestants have their paramilitary armies, too. Indeed, in the last three years before the ceasefire, "loyalist" paramilitaries actually murdered more people than the IRA.

Seeking "peace" in this context is dangerous, because if the IRA ever forces or persuades Britain to withdraw its troops, the Protestant paramilitaries would go flat out to create a smaller, more defensible Protestant state that would be "cleansed" of its Catholic minority. That would be another Bosnia in full costume dress — "Armageddon," in Irish political jargon.

So for the past quarter-century Britain has sat on the Northern Irish problem, at considerable political, financial and human cost to itself. The oppressive Protestant political monopoly in Northern Ireland was broken by simply suppressing local self-government, and both the IRA and Protestant paramilitaries were held in check by British troops.

There is no concrete British interest in Northern Ireland that would remotely justify such an investment — but it is only fair, since Britain bears the historical guilt for creating the problem in the first place. And as long as Britain goes on bearing the burden in Northern Ireland, Armageddon will not arrive.

By 1994, some elements in the IRA had clearly accepted the impossibility — and even the undesirability — of a military victory over the British, and were willing to negotiate a ceasefire. Equally clearly, other elements of the IRA clung to their belief that if the British army could be driven out, they would win the ensuing civil war. The latter have come out on top.

The Protestant "hard men" in the paramilitaries were equally determined to return to confrontation, for fear that Britain might achieve some sort of temporary deal that would let it sneak out of Ireland. So the "peace" was doomed, and normal service has been resumed: never-ending, low-intensity war.

For how long? Well, if current birth rates persist, Catholics will finally become a majority in Northern Ireland in 2037, a mere 41 years from now. At that point, Irish unification could be achieved by democratic vote — if the Catholic birth rate never falls, and if everybody stays in their ethno-religious boxes, and if anybody cares about Irish unification in 2037. But don't hold your breath.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Jordan spearheads revival of peace process in the region

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

THE FLURRY of diplomatic activity in the Middle East to break the deadlock in the peace process, the situation in the occupied Arab lands and domestic affairs were the main features of the Arabic dailies last week.

Thanks to Jordan's active diplomatic offensive we are once more optimistic about the resumption of the peace process, said Al Ra'i daily in commenting on the current diplomatic offensive in the region.

Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's meetings with his Egyptian and Syrian counterparts and with the Israeli premier for in-depth discussion of the situation helped give momentum to the diplomatic efforts not only at the regional but also at the international level, prompting the French and the American presidents to call King Hussein to discuss the issue, noted the paper.

It said that in Benyamin Netanyahu's statements to the press in Cairo one can detect a new trend in his policy, especially his announcement that Israel remains committed to all the agreements with the Palestinians.

Commenting on the same theme, Hamadeh Faraaneh, a writer for Al Dustour, said that Mr. Kabariti's visit to Israel, following his meetings in Cairo with Egyptian and Syrian officials, reflect the Kingdom's deep concern over the peace process.

The writer said that Israel should understand that peace is good for Israel, more than for the Arabs, and the Jordanian efforts are bound to benefit the Israeli society as well as the Palestinians and the other Arab countries. Furthermore, the Arabs have expressed their readiness to reach peace with the Israelis and they made it clear that peace is a strategic option for them, said the writer.

Therefore, he said, the Arabs can only hope that the Israeli government will move back to the right track in its dealings with its neighbours, particularly with the Palestinians.

Mr. Kabariti's shuttle diplomacy in the region was clearly an effort to salvage the peace process, said Mohammad Kawash, a writer for Al Dustour. Through his contacts with officials in Syria, Egypt and Israel, Mr. Kabariti sought to close the gap between the various parties' views and he has obviously succeeded in his mission, said the writer.

Since Jordan is at peace with Israel, it is eligible to act for the other Arab parties and carry out a mediation efforts for the peace process on all the other tracks, he noted. Indeed, Mr. Kabariti's contacts have created a new atmosphere, free of tension, that helped pave the ground for the resumption of the peace process and prompted the U.S. administration to send its special Middle East envoy to the region for that purpose.

Criticising Netanyahu for his hardline policies, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that the prime minister of Israel believes that the whole world should adapt to his stands and accept his arrogance.

The writer said that Mr. Netanyahu has expansionist ambitions which can by no means be reconciled with the requirements of the peace process and the world community's stand with regard to the Middle East question. Saying that the Arab countries can by no means adapt to the new Israeli government's position, the writer said it is very hard to expect the world community and even the United States to be convinced by Mr. Netanyahu's hardline position and adapt to his hard line stance regarding the peace process.

With reference to the occupied Arab lands, a writer for Al Dustour said that as long as the Jewish settlement programmes continue, the aspired peace will be out of reach for the Palestinians and the Israelis alike.

Without Israel's withdrawal from the Syrian and Lebanese lands, Israel can never enjoy any peace with its northern borders, said Mohammad Kawash. It is most frustrating, he said, to see the United States, the sponsor of the Middle East process, accepting Mr. Netanyahu's hardline policies and applauding his statements to the Congress. The United States should realise that such Israeli policies and the American backing for Mr. Netanyahu can only rekindle tension and trigger further acts of violence.

Discussing the government's decision to float the bread prices, Fahed Fanek, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that the measure was necessary to help the country adapt to the economic reform programme. By substituting the subsidies across the board with subsidies for Jordanians only, the government has taken a step that other governments have failed to take since 1974 when the Ministry of Supply came into being.

Parliament members had approved the government's policy statement which had said it would allocate JD 38 million for subsidies, but they must now reconsider the situation after realising that JD 100 million would not even be enough for the subsidies, he said.

The writer said that the government's decision to change the way of providing subsidy for bread was a step in the right direction and one that would help Jordan remain committed to the economic reform programme.

A writer for Al Dustour discussed the population growth in Jordan, saying that the country was expected to accommodate 10 million people in 19 years from now.

Fakhri Kawar said that the unchecked population growth is causing a shortage in the country's resources and the population explosion in the coming years must be given due consideration and examination by all concerned parties and Jordanians at large since the future generations will suffer as a result of our irresponsible actions.

Arafat's tentacles grip Palestinians

By David Hirst

YASSER ARAFAT, the Palestinian leader, is building a police and security force so large and costly it will become a serious danger to himself and to the peace process it is supposed to protect, say Western diplomats, aid workers and even some of his senior officials.

Disregarding the Oslo accord, under which the Palestinian National Authority was supposed to have a single police force of no more than 12,000 men, Mr. Arafat has recruited between 40,000 and 50,000 men to an array of security and intelligence agencies.

Under his personal control, they are engaging in systematic extortion and often whimsical repression.

Reinforcing this apparatus of control is the state security court. This secret military tribunal which generally meets in the middle of the night denies defendants the right to prepare a defence — or even to prior knowledge of the charges against them.

Mr. Arafat has the sole power to "confirm, ease or stiffen" any sentence the court passes. It recently ordered the 17-day detention of a human rights activist and Arafat critic, Iyad Al Sarraj on criminal charges — subsequently dropped under international pressure — of possessing drugs and breaking a policeman's arm in jail.

According to his critics, Mr. Arafat has used the pretext of "fighting terrorism" to build a apparatus which, in the end, he is likely to use in defence of himself and a small elite, discredited by their close collaboration with the Israelis, their oppression of their own people, their corruption and mismanagement.

The critics charge that Israel and the United States have either actively encouraged or acquiesced Mr. Arafat's dictatorial tendencies and abuse of human rights.

Running his Palestinian National Authority much like he ran his armed "revolution," he has carried divide-and-rule policies to extraordinary lengths. Western advisers serving the authority recently compiled a list of 10 identifiable security agencies, heavily geared towards political surveillance rather than law and order, which have no official existence under the Oslo accord, and no defined responsibilities.

All they have in common is their allegiance to Mr. Arafat, who seems to be deliberately allowing them to compete for the spoils of economic, political and social power. That prevents them from coalescing into a rival power centre to himself.

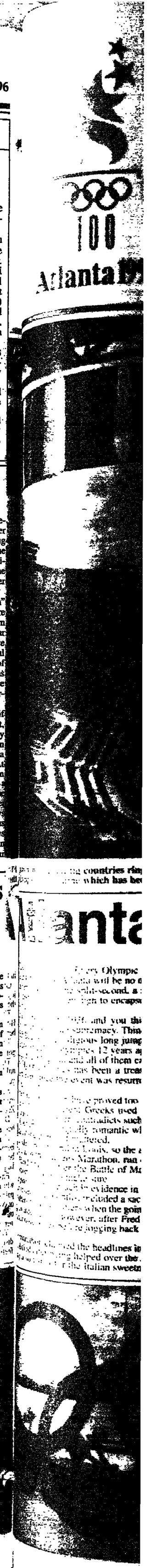
They have as many as 17 prisons in Gaza alone. The minister of justice has privately admitted he does not know which agency holds which prisoners, and where.

One of their key functions is to raise money, by illegal means, for themselves and their boss, who uses secret patronage as a vital instrument of control. They have parcelled out the whole of Gaza's desperately flagging economic life among themselves for extortion.

One danger — now much talked about even in Mr. Arafat's own entourage — is that the Israelis will turn the security force, or part of it, against him. "They have so penetrated it," said one official, that some of its leaders now depend on them at least as much as they do on Arafat. The time is coming when the Israelis decide that Arafat — who argues a lot, much — has served his purpose."

He voiced the widely held view that the Israelis are grooming Abu Mazen, one of the secret negotiators of the Oslo accord, to take Mr. Arafat's place, and that they will count on Mohammad Dahlan, head of Preventative Security in Gaza, to lead the putsch.

The Guardian



Chuckwagon racers risk danger for thrills and spills

By Jeffrey Jones
Reuter

CALGARY, Alberta — It's a dangerous, gruelling and expensive route to a rush that lasts barely a minute, but the cowboys racing the thundering chuckwagons at the Calgary stampede say the rewards outweigh the risks.

Chuckwagon racing, the high-stakes event at the centre of the world's biggest annual outdoor rodeo, blends the speed of thoroughbred racing, the thrill of rodeo and the risk of motorsport.

The stampede's Rangeland Derby, where 36 top-ranked chuckwagon teams vie for a Canadian dollars 50,000 ($36,500) purse as well as daily prize money, is one of 11 races held each summer across western Canada and the northern U.S.

It is considered the Olympics of chuckwagon racing because of the stampede's prominence in North American rodeo circles and a yearly thirst of national television audiences for its gritty thrills and spills.

The 10-day Calgary stampede also includes such rodeo events as bull-riding, calf roping and steer wrestling.

In the chuckwagon event, teams of four horses pull a wooden-spoked covered wagon through a sharp turnaround lined by barrels and then blast around a thoroughbread-racing-size dirt track accompanied by mounted outriders.

The spectacle of speeding men and horses keeps fans on the edge of their seats for the action that lasts as long as a minute and 14 seconds. It can lead to spectacular collisions and sometimes death.

Chuckwagon racing traces its roots to the western Canadian frontier of the late 1800s, when a camp complete with cookstove had to be packed up and tossed into a covered wagon in the morning for the day's cattle herding.

Today, the thrill of the sport and love of the nomadic lifestyle keep the crews coming back year after year.

"I've been driving 32 years and before that outriding. I've always been around horses," said Dallas Dorchester, at 50, one of the sport's most successful drivers.

The soft-spoken Dorchester, based in Falun, Alberta, a small town 60 km south of Edmonton, was leading the pack midway through this year's derby.

"For me, it's pretty good financially, I've got an excellent sponsor that treats me well. We're just starting after all these years to get big sponsors behind us."

It costs a heap of cash keeping a crew's horses fed and its staff working behind the scenes.

To sponsor chuckwagons, companies bid in an auction for the right to put their corporate brand on the wagon's tarpaulin cover.

Mr. Dorchester, a two-time Rangeland Derby champion, is the stampede's hottest property, with his tarp garnering a record $91,250 from a Calgary-based real estate developer last year and $43,800 this year.

The glamour of the race masks a hard-working life of travelling across the vast spaces of rural Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, setting up stables for the horses, keeping them fed and exercised and hopefully roping in some cash along the way.

Behind the cheering crowds in the stampede grandstand, crews bide their time before the evening action in a huge maze of pungent indoor stables, tending to horses, nursing injuries and even catching up on some much-needed sleep.

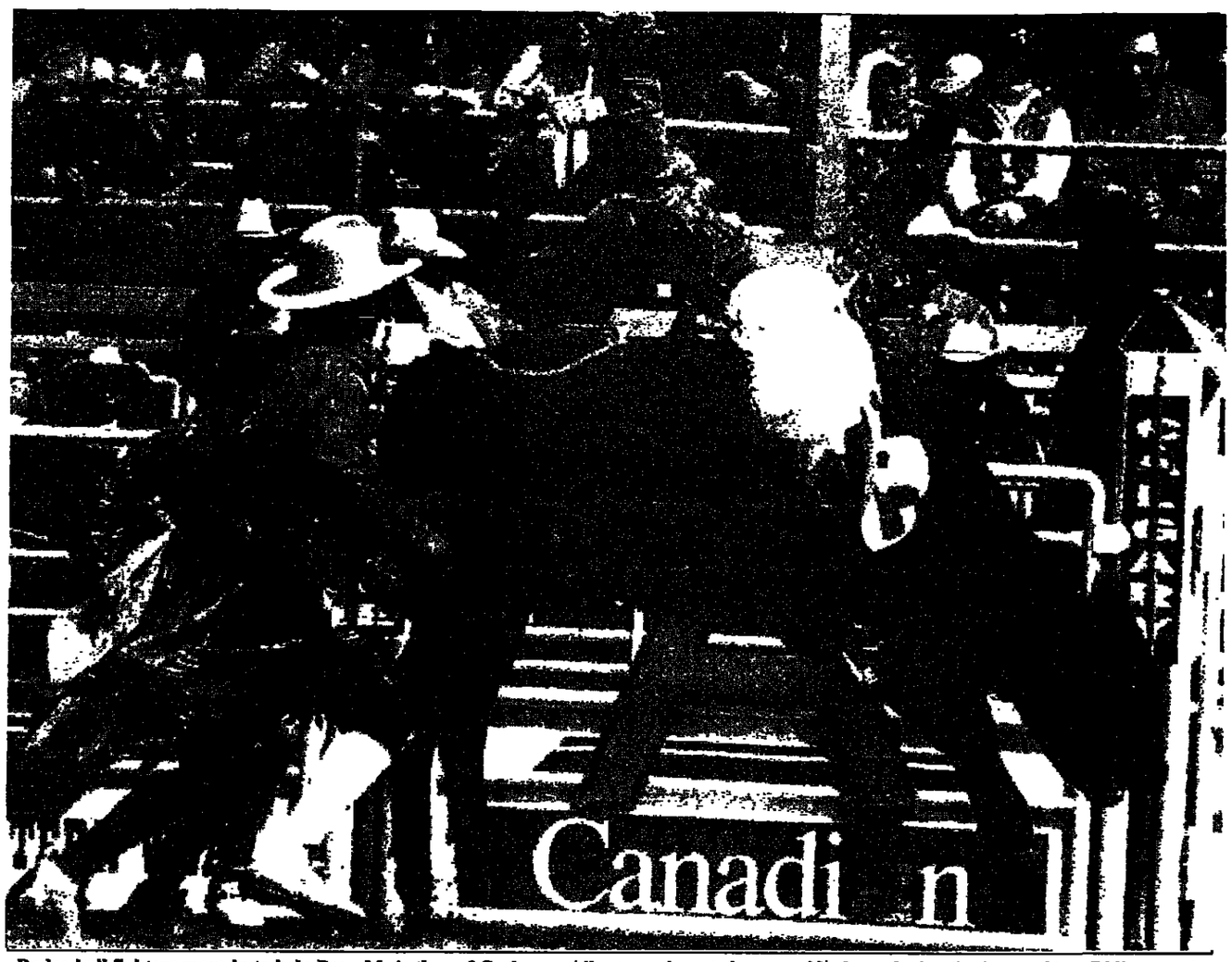
Terry Conners, a 26-year-old stable hand for driver Tyler Helmig, sits in the stable in the afternoon running an electric vibrator over his throbbing leg.

"We pony (exercise) horses in the morning to exercise them and we clean stalls while they're being ponied. I was taking a new one back into the stall, it got a little spunky and kicked me in the thigh," Mr. Conners said. "Gave me a big charley horse."

But the bruises are part of the game and the thrill of wagon racing — and the aspirations of those behind the scenes to eventually sit in the driver's seat — keeps people in the sport, he said.

Even the racing deaths in the past two years of two top-ranked drivers — one of whom has tossed from his driver's perch and actually run over by his own wagon — fail to deter the stalwarts.

"These guys do this for a living," Mr. Conners said. "It's the thrill of living — that's how they thrive. You let it eat you up and you won't drive."



Rodeo bull fighters move in to help Beau McArthur of Cochrane, Alberta, as he gets hung upside down during the Junior Steer Riding event at the Calgary Stampede (Reuter photo)

Women's university a rare oasis amid Sudan's education turmoil

OMDURMAN, Sudan (AP) — The only women's college in the Arab World has shielded itself from the wrenching changes at Sudan's state-run colleges by following a simple maxim: No politics.

"There are no political meetings here," said Lucy Joseph, a third-year student at the independent Al Ahfad University. "No one talks about politics, and that keeps us away from problems."

So while the Islamic government in Khartoum across the Nile reins in the big universities, Al Ahfad goes its own way.

Its curriculum has a decidedly activist bent, and many of the students say that after graduation they plan to return to their villages, help rural women or work with development and aid groups.

The college still teaches in English — despite the government's efforts to institute Arabic as the medium of instruction. Unlike at other colleges, women are under no pressure to wear the veil.

Gassim Badri, the university's president, said Al Ahfad wants to train women as "agents of change" in a country where nearly nine of every 10 women are illiterate and women on average live to only age 53.

A course in rural development is compulsory, and all 4,000 students must spend time in a village during their third year, he said.

"We want a practical aspect to our education rather than the traditional university, ivory tower education," Mr. Badri said.

In a courtyard shaded by date palms and eucalyptus trees, women extol the independence at Al Ahfad. Often hailing from traditional homes in a Sudan that is increasingly conservative and religious, the students seem to relish their freedom.

"The girls who graduate from here know how to survive on their own," said Mayada Abdulahi, a first-year student in medicine. "We don't feel there is any difference between us and the men who graduate from another university."

"There are no political meetings here. No one talks about politics, and that keeps us away from problems."

Arabs can do business with Netanyahu

(Continued from page 1)

naturally, because he was standing in an Arab capital and next to the head of the biggest Arab state," Mr. Salam told Reuters, referring to Mr. Netanyahu's trip to Washington last week.

"But he did not answer the big questions...such as his stand on Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, the fate of agreements signed with the previous government and final-status negotiations."

Ahmed Qouriea, speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council,

told Reuters: "I cannot say that there has been a change in the Israeli position before we see on the ground what measures will be taken by the Israeli government." Mr. Netanyahu pleased Egyptian officials by saying Israel would stick to the "terms of reference" of the 1991 Madrid peace conference, which reinforced the principle of returning occupied Arab land for peace.

But asked specifically about land-for-peace, Mr. Netanyahu said

there were "differing interpretations on that principle." He has said his interpretation is that Israel gave back 90 per cent of the land captured in 1967 when it handed back Sinai to Egypt.

Despite Mr. Mubarak's positive assessment of his meeting with Mr. Netanyahu, the view in Israel was that Mr. Netanyahu pulled off a coup in his Cairo talks, giving little away to his Arab neighbours but managing to rekindle Egyptian hopes for the future of the peace process.

"Mubarak: I am reassured. Netanyahu: I gave away nothing," said the Israeli Yediot Aharanot summarising the results of the talks in Cairo on Thursday.

The right-wing, nationalist leader swayed little from his hardline stand, refusing to back down from his refusal to trade occupied Arab land for peace.

Instead, he announced a slight easing of the closure on the Palestinian territories, allowing 10,000 more Palestinians back to their jobs in Israel.

But the figure was less generous than the Israeli press had expected and lower than first easing of the blockade in June when 25,000 workers were authorised to return to work.

Mr. Netanyahu also made great play of announcing that his foreign minister would hold talks next week with Mr. Arafat, but again dodged questions on whether he would meet himself with the PLO leader. News reports said that David Levy will meet Mr. Arafat Tuesday.

On Friday huge question marks still hung over the details of exactly how Mr. Netanyahu intends to pursue the peace process with his Arab neighbours.

No date has yet been fixed for the long-delayed Israeli troop pullout from four-fifths of the flashpoint town of Hebron on the West Bank. The redeployment had been due to take place in March but was delayed by former Premier Shimon Peres following a wave of Islamic militant bomb attacks.

Israeli commentators on Friday noted the "positive tone" adopted by Mr. Mubarak, in stark contrast to the warnings launched by the Arab summit in Cairo on June 22-23.

"Netanyahu has won a certificate of good behaviour from President Mubarak," chorused both the Yediot Aharonot and the Maariv, adding the Egyptian leader was determined the talks should be seen as a success.

With international eyes on the changing political map of the Middle East, Mr. Mubarak was keen to show off Egypt's key role in bringing together the two sides, especially ahead of talks in Washington when he aims to ask for a renewal of U.S. aid, the papers said.

"President Mubarak knows that Washington will not put any pressure on Israel before the presidential elections in November and that under such conditions it is better to give the prime minister a chance," said Maariv.

However, all the papers stressed that Egypt's attitude was only a respite and that there were still deep differences.

"President Mubarak has changed Netanyahu's image from the fanatic 'Arab eater' to a credible partner in less than a month," Maariv said.

"But let there be no illusion, this truce will end if Netanyahu does not respect his commitments."

Iraq seeks Turkish help on sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is striving to build relations with the Islamist government in Turkey, pledging a large chunk of trade under its food-for-oil deal with the U.N. and even more trade if U.N. sanctions are fully lifted, diplomats said on Friday.

They said Iraq was aware of the key role Ankara played in enforcing U.N. trade sanctions on it, still in place for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq's loss of control over its three Kurdish provinces, they added, was due to the presence of U.S.-led airpower in Turkey guarding rebel Kurds against any possible military attacks by Baghdad.

Iraq officially welcomed Turkey's first Islamist government which assumed office last month and urged Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to live up to electoral promises — ending the mandate of the U.S.-led allied air force in southern Turkey and reviving the once lucrative cross-border trade. Mr. Erbakan has backtracked on the promise to put an end to the mandate but many of his MPs would like to see the force go. The Turkish parliament, in response to a request from Mr. Erbakan's ruling Islamists, is to hold a closed-door debate on the force before a vote later this month on whether to extend its mandate.

U.S. envoy to visit the region

(Continued from page 1)

The officials believe that the Israeli government will be driven by Israeli national interests to implement the agreements with the Palestinians and to pave the way for negotiations with Syria. During his trip to Washington, Mr. Netanyahu went out of his way to ensure American Jews and potential investors that the normalisation process was going to proceed smoothly with the Arab countries.

Therefore, administration officials argue that the Israeli government will realise that it cannot attract foreign investment unless peaceful and normal relations are established with its Arab neighbours. Arab-American critics of the American policy fear that the American reluctance to pressure Israel to comply with the peace agreements and the principle of land-for-peace would undermine the peace process.

But administration officials say that the Israeli government should be given a chance to adjust to what they describe as complex agreements that it had inherited.

Iraq wants swift action on U.N. food plan

(Continued from page 1)

dures still had to be approved by the U.N.

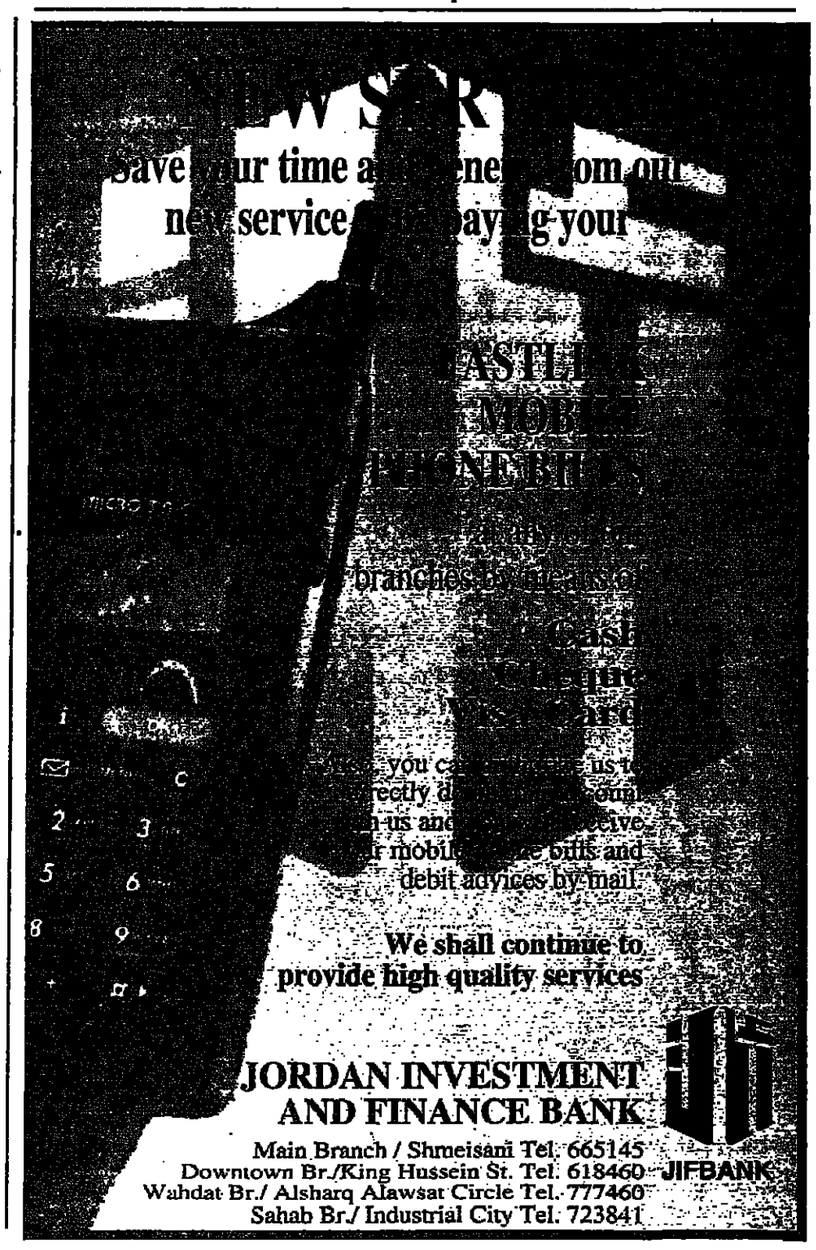
Security Council before Iraq could sign the oil contracts whose profits are to pay for the humanitarian supplies. Under the deal struck in May, Iraq will be allowed to export limited quantities of crude for the first time since the embargo was imposed.

It will be allowed to sell a billion dollars of crude every six months under strict international control to buy food and medicines for the stricken population.

Traders in Baghdad said prices could fall from Saturday, as they showed only a slight drop on Friday with a kilogramme (2.2 pounds) of sugar selling for 550 dinars compared with 600 the day before, while flour dropped from 400 dinars to 375 and rice from 450 to 400.

The United States had vetoed the first version of the Iraqi distribution plan. It was subsequently amended during two weeks of negotiations here.

Washington feared that the Iraqi government was seeking to import technology and thus contravene the sanctions regime which is to remain in place.



Kuwait encourages foreigners to take part in privatisation

KUWAIT (R) — Foreign investors would be welcome to participate in the planned privatisation of Kuwaiti state utilities, the Gulf state's finance minister said in remarks published Thursday.

"We are very interested in encouraging foreign investors to enter some projects," Finance Minister Nasser Abdulla Al Rodhan was quoted as saying by the Arab Times.

"The country would benefit from foreign investment which would draw on expertise in many fields and attract capital," he said.

Sheikh Rodhan was speaking after talks Wednesday with parliament's finance and economic affairs committee about drafting a privatisation law to regulate the sale of major utilities to private interests.

In the past two years the government has sold stakes in local firms to Kuwaiti investors for a total of 350 million dinars ($1.17 billion) in a preliminary phase of privatisaion of the state-orchestrated economy.

But it has not started the main phase — the transfer of public services to private ownership — largely because this would probably require shedding Kuwaiti staff from institutions described by economists as bloated and inefficient.

Sheikh Rodhan gave no timetable for privatistion of utilities and offered no further details about foreign involvement. Only Kuwaitis, and in some cases Arab Gulf nationals, have been allowed to take part in the preliminary phase of the process.

Sheikh Rodhan said the government was considering privatising part or all of the state's health, electricity, communications, posts and education services.

A privatisation law would restructure state subsidies on services, encouraging their operation on a commercial basis and seek to support employment of Kuwaiti nationals, he said.

"We want to ensure full employment for Kuwaiti manpower, since the government will be incapable of employing all newly graduated Kuwaitis," he said.

He said both the committee and the government had proposed separate draft laws but there was little difference between them and both sides would now work to produce a joint version.

Critics say privatisation has been piecemeal. They have called for a law to systematise the process and integrate it into wider reforms of trade, industry and public finance.

Egypt plans to refine Libyan crude oil in Alexandria

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and Libya are considering building a $300 million crude oil pipeline to supply Libyan oil to refineries at the Egyptian port of Alexandria, a senior oil industry official has said.

Sameh Fahmi, vice president for projects at the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation, said the 600-kilometre pipeline would pump up to 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) of high grade oil from the east Libyan town of Tobruk.

"Alexandria is our highest priority...because the market for oil products in the Mediterranean is very good," Mr. Fahmi told Reuters.

He said the plan was part of a wider Egyptian strategy to draw private sector refining and downstream projects to its northern port city.

Mr. Fahmi added that a joint Libyan-Egyptian team would complete its preliminary feasibility study next month.

The study would check the cost of pumping oil by pipeline compared to shipping it by tanker, and assess the optimal capacity and future demand for crude in Alexandria.

A more detailed survey of the pipeline's exact route would take six more months, Mr. Fahmi said.

"You're talking about something in the region of 100,000 to 150,000 barrels a day, this is in my opinion the economic level," he said.

Oil industry sources said they believed the pipeline plan had a 50 per cent chance of getting off the ground, but cautioned that Libya's commitment to the project was unclear.

"The pipeline will take three to four years (to build) so we have to foresee the refineries' capacity in the year 2000," Mr. Fahmi said.

Expansion plans at two Alexandria refineries are due to increase daily capacity by around 20,000 bpd to 180,000 bpd and an Egyptian-Israeli private sector joint venture, Middle East Oil Refinery, plans to build another 100,000 bpd plant.

Egypt is also seeking private sector investment for major petrochemical projects, including ethylene, polyethylene and polypropylene plants in Alexandria which could use oil products from the refineries as feedstock.

Mr. Fahmi declined to say whether the Middle East Oil Refinery, in which an Israeli businessman holds a 40 per cent stake, might receive Libyan oil.

"They have their own plans," he said.

Libya produces around 1.4 million bpd of crude, mainly for export to European markets, but its oil industry has been hit by a U.N. embargo on importing equipment because Tripoli refuses to hand over for trial two men wanted over the bombing of an airliner in 1988.

Mubarak refuses to confirm economic summit

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak refused Thursday to explicitly confirm the holding on schedule of an annual regional economic conference attended by Israel.

The Middle East conference on economic development "is extremely important and we are working seriously to prepare the groundwork for holding it on schedule if possible," Mr. Mubarak said at a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

He was responding to a question on whether Egypt was considering not hosting conference, set for November, or refusing to invite Israel. "We are working seriously with the Israeli prime minister to help hold this summit on schedule," Mr. Mubarak said. The two previous economic conferences were held in 1994 in Casablanca and 1995 in Amman with the participation of most Arab states and Israel.

For his part, Mr. Netanyahu underlined the importance of the summit and said he had discussed economic ties between Israel and Egypt during his two hours of talks with Mr. Mubarak on Thursday.

He pointed to "agricultural cooperation which has gone on for a long time."

Clinton unveils higher growth forecast and lower deficit

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House has unveiled stronger economic forecasts for 1996 while announcing it expects a sharply lower budget deficit, a combination that is likely to help President Bill Clinton's reelection effort.

Releasing its mid-session economic review, the White House said that it expects 1996 gross domestic product to grow by 2.6 per cent this year, up from its previous forecast of 2.2 per cent growth and 1995's 1.5 per cent rise.

The economic review, which is compiled by the Office of Management and Budget, also projects the federal budget deficit to shrink to $116.8 billion, a steep drop from the $145.6 billion that it had projected as recently as March.

The White House wasted no time in taking credit for the figures, saying they reflected the success of Mr. Clinton's 1993 deficit reduction package.

"The fact is, our economy is now the soundest it's been in a generation," the president said in speech to the National Governors' Association, adding the deficit is now forecast at its lowest proportion to the overall economy since 1974.

"The results of that plan are proving themselves today," added White House Chief Oof Staff Leon Panetta.

Mr. Panetta noted there was a huge fight in Congress over the 1993 deficit package, which did not win a single Republican vote because of its tax increases.

"This is one battle that we did win," he said. "It is a victory not only for the president and for those that work with the president, but more importantly for the American people."

The economy is proving a potent weapon in Mr. Clinton's battle against former Republican senator Bob Dole, who is all but certain to be his party's nominee in the Nov. 5 election.

The Republicans, who had hoped to use sluggish growth as an issue in the election, instead face a string of economic figures showing a strong economy and a series of polls giving Mr. Clinton double-digit leads over Mr. Dole.

Republicans sought to steal Mr. Clinton's thunder over the revised economic data, with one saying the cut in the budget deficit had nothing to do with the president or the Congress.

"The administration taking credit for it is like the rooster taking credit for the sunrise," Republican Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico said in a statement.

Mr. Domenici, who chairs the Senate Budget Committee, argued that 60 per cent of the deficit reduction was simply the result of revisions in technical assumptions and economic forecasts.

But analysts said Mr. Clinton deserved much of the credit for the figures because of deficit reduction, even if that was not the whole story of the economy's performance.

"I am one of those people who thinks that the president should get credit for the economy," said Price Waterhouse budget analyst Stan Collender. "The 1993 was indeed important in terms of putting the deficit on a downward path."

"On the narrow issue of the deficit and its effect on the economy ... Yes, he deserves credit," said Lehman Brothers analyst Kim Wallace. "On the overall behaviour of the economy in this business cycle, the credit he deserves does not go any further than the deficit reduction of 1993."

Weizman slams hiring foreigners in Israel

MACABI (AFP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman said that it "is shame on Israel to hire foreigners." Addressing Israeli farmers here, Mr. Weizman said: "It is shame on Israel to hire Thai and Romanian workers in the fields of construction."

He added : "It will be better to conclude an agreement with the Palestinians and hire 150,000 Palestinian workers whom we know where they come from and where they go." He accentuated the importance of Jewish labour force stressing that "the future of Israel lies in our work."

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"The critics said the movie is shallow, moronic, silly and unnecessarily violent—I can't wait to see it!"

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CEEPA

LYRUS

THALEC

ORRBEK

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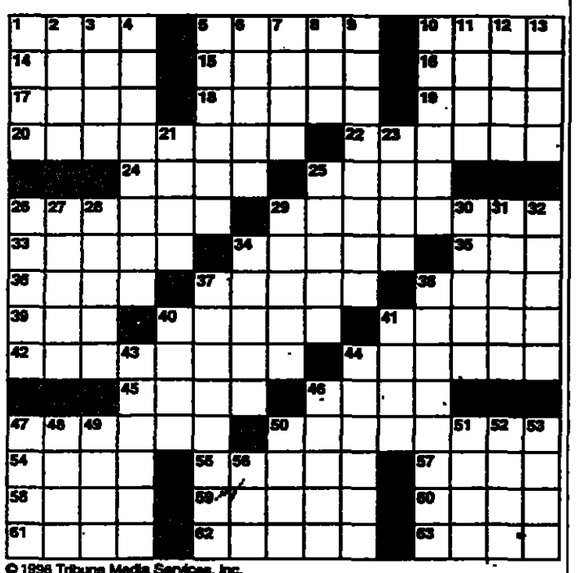
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here : "○○○○" ○○○○

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DAISY MIRTH OUTWIT BRONCO
Answer: Hitchhikers should get this from motorists — THUMBS DOWN

THE Daily Crossword by Mary E. Brindamour



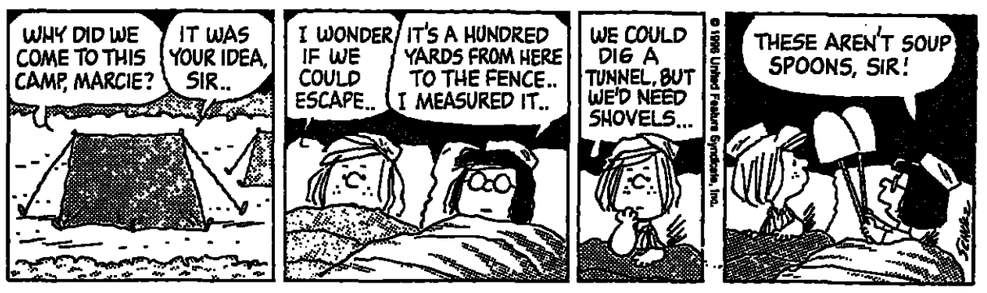
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ACROSS
1 Journalist's query
5 Wealthy one
10 Part of USA: abbr.
14 Ireland
15 Andre's bye-bye
16 Skirt insert
17 Kind of market
18 Council of —
19 Director Kazan
20 More cozy
22 Certain bicycle
24 HS affair
25 Fax a message
26 African primate
29 Sensational headline
33 Jetson's son
34 Political power
35 Potent potable
36 Cut of meat
37 Acrimonious
38 Slang talk
39 Wayside stopover
40 Seasoning herb
41 *Jury members*
42 Compartmented box
44 Suzanne of TV
45 Radiation units
46 Lamp need
47 More slippery
50 Reinvestment, of a kind
54 Leveling device
55 Praying figure, in art
57 — Ridge (noted racehorse)
58 Night table item
59 *Horse dealer, in* England
60 Tied
61 Pindar output
62 Money reserve
63 "— of Eden"

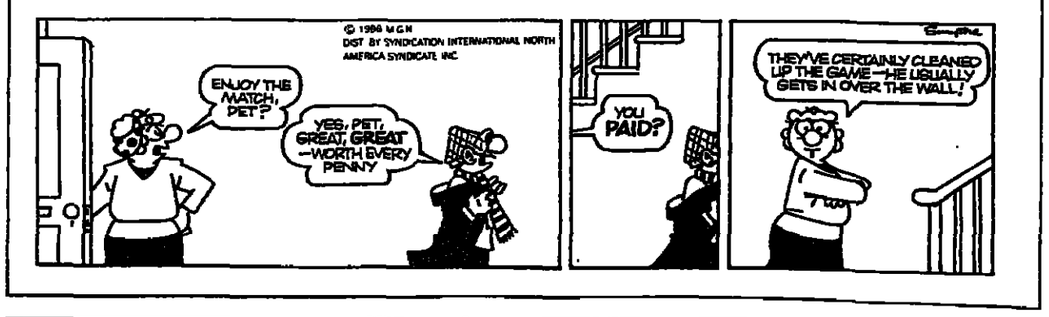
DOWN
1 Woven fabric
2 Port of Hawaii
3 Bailiwick
4 Measuring item
5 Country
6 To the point
7 Funeral stand
8 Wine: pref.
9 Charm with flattery
10 Things to do
11 Form
12 PA port
13 Paper quantity
21 Helen of —
23 Dill, old style
25 Make a point
26 Negate
27 In company with
28 — home the bacon
29 Dred Scott was one
30 Pine Tree State
31 Young eel
32 *Group dances*
34 IOUs
37 Irish symbol
38 Noisy celebration
40 Indian
41 Take a survey
43 Wrinkles
44 Hot and humid
46 Lisa of Cosby sitcom
47 European capital
48 "If — my way..."
49 — rickey
50 In awe
51 — voce (orally)
52 Holiday times
53 Speak vehemently
56 Vive le —!

A	S	T	I	■	P	E	A	S	■	P	L	A	T	E
S	E	E	M	■	R	A	M	P	■	R	A	B	I	D
H	E	A	P	■	I	R	A	L	■	E	M	B	E	D
■	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	C	O	M	P	A	N	Y
■	■	■	D	U	D	■	■	S	L	I	P	■	■	■
A	R	M	E	N	I	A	N	■	E	X	O	T	I	C
S	H	A	■	D	E	C	O	Y	■	■	S	O	D	A
H	I	R	E	A	U	T	H	O	R	I	T	I	E	S
U	N	I	T	■	H	O	G	A	N	■	L	A	T	■
R	E	A	R	E	D	■	W	A	I	T	R	E	S	S
■	■	■	U	N	D	O	■	■	N	R	A	■	■	■
W	A	I	S	T	E	D	E	F	F	O	R	T	S	■
H	E	N	C	E	■	I	L	I	A	■	E	A	C	H
A	R	O	A	R	■	S	I	L	L	■	S	L	U	E
M	O	R	N	S	■	T	A	L	L	■	T	E	D	S

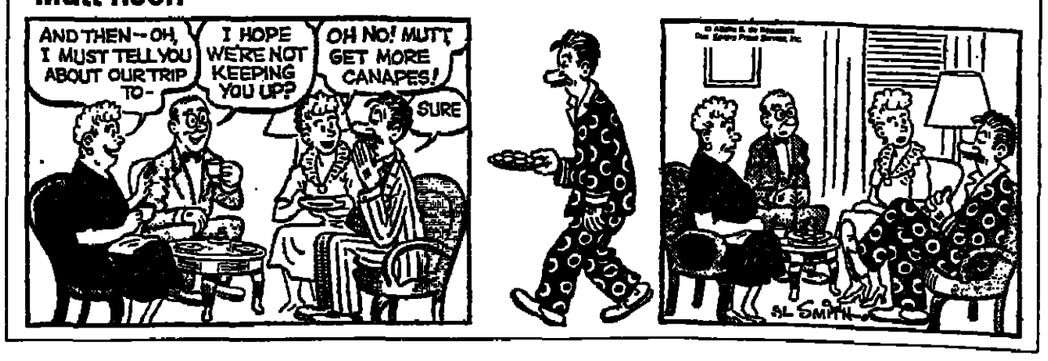
Peanuts



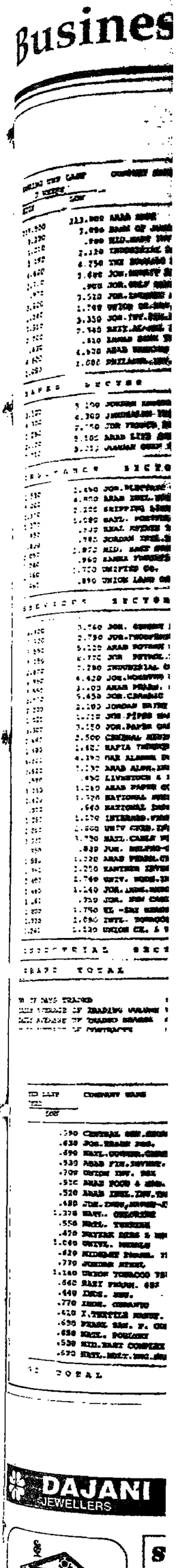
Andy Capp



Mutt'nJeff



Business



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to handle your career activities most efficiently today, whether it be at home or in the outside world. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friends out on the town and have some fun together.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Early this morning make appointments for this evening's entertainment, then get that bill paid up. Your mate is in a testy mood, however, with some gentle persuasion you can determine the root cause and give some support.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day today to handle duties of your loved ones and get your home in better condition. Steer clear of recreation in the evening and seek out the advice of a bigwig on some important new career activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) The morning today is best for shopping and handling desk career activities which have backlogged for some time. Later this evening, don't get into a family squabble or there could be some words exchanged which you all will regret.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have an opportunity today to get your financial matters improved so that you become more prosperous in the days ahead. Later this evening will be good for meeting with some authority figure and discuss your career activities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can shop around for whatever you need and get good results. Buy a little gift for your mate and please this person as a result of your affection and he or she will appreciate your gesture with great anticipation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Any intimate matters can be improved in the morning today, so get busy at them, however, don't be forceful in the evening or you will discover that your actions will receive a negative reaction from those close to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Look to high-minded close friends for good ideas which can help you to gain your aims, then do your career activities alone. Later this evening you can contact some fellow associate who can be of great help.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can handle business activities well today, even though it is the end of the week, so get busy early and you will discover that you will gain prestige as a result of your actions and through recognition by some bigwig.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) You find that you can further your ambitions quite well during the daytime today, however, tonight could prove disappointing if you are not diligent in your career activities and proceed in some forward method of operation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Acquire information you need today so that you can make a close friend of a bigwig you can go to any time you need assistance. Later this evening will be good for meeting with influential persons for a brain session.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day today to converse with a fellow associate until you come to a true understanding with this person. Save your money at this time for a rainy day and you will have some extra funds when there are lean times.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

DAJANI JEWELLERS

FOR RENT
- 3 bedrooms apartment in Shmeisani, second floor, 220 sq.m.
- 3 bedrooms in Al Rabia area, third floor, 190 sq.m.

Abdoun Real Estate
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Fax: 810520

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Patisserie
Soups & Salads Café
OPEN DAILY FROM 10 A.M - 1 A.M
Tel. 857199
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Umm Uthaina behind San Rock Hotel

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
AMMAN BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIAN
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
TRADING MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (13/07/1996 - 17/07/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

DURING THE LAST 7 WEEKS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	B/E	DIV	No. OF CONTRACT	No. OF SHARES EXECUTED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER SHARES
219.500	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.9	1.60	10	260	56588	214.00	218.50	216.00	216.50 +	4.50	217.388	.006
3.290	3.050	BANK OF JORDAN	10.9	8.00	6	800	2414	3.01	3.02	3.02	3.02 -	.02	3.018	.008
2.150	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	60.4	8.00	14	18000	18408	.98	.98	.98	.92 +	.02	.911	.188
6.490	6.250	THE HOUSING BK.	5.0	6.36	10	4000	8729	2.14	2.20	2.16	2.19 +	.05	2.182	.037
2.770	2.680	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	13.2	2.80	58	281386	1204911	4.26	5.00	4.25	4.32 +	.66	4.282	1.126
.970	.960	JOR.GULF BANK	19.6	8.80	21	16756	45416	2.71	2.72	2.71	2.71 -		2.716	.168
3.800	3.520	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	5.7	7.29	52	68092	96581	.92	.96	.92	.96 +	.04	.942	.380
1.846	1.700	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	17.2	8.00	38	18693	48913	3.52	3.60	3.52	3.60 +	.06	3.596	.093
3.510	3.350	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	125.6	8.00	7	1877	2705	1.74	1.76	1.70	1.76 +	.01	1.715	.618
2.700	2.340	ARIT.AL-MAL (ARTHA)	17.8	0.00	11	6727	15488	2.38	2.38	2.27	2.30 -	.08	3.276	.047
.438	.310	ARAB BANK INV.	1.5	6.36	18	3850	9266	2.34	2.46	2.36	2.35 +	.01	2.407	.152
4.600	4.500	ARAB BANKING CO.	-	8.00	192	262450	87536	.23	.25	.20	.21 -	.02	.324	1.758
1.080	1.000	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	26.5	8.00	1	300	1419	4.80	4.72	4.72	4.73 +	.22	4.730	.003
			-	0.00	53	21776	26154	1.08	1.13	1.09	1.11 (	.03	1.196	.318
BANKS SECTOR					485	699546	1591459	INDEX NUMBER : 179.32					CHANGE :+ 2.88%	
3.100	3.100	JORDAN INSURANCE	13.2	3.33	1	1000	3000	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00 -	.18	3.000	.020
4.300	4.300	INTERNATION INSUR.	11.3	4.71	2	250	1065	4.30	4.30	4.25	4.25 -	.05	4.260	.022
2.250	2.150	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	6.6	8.81	18	7708	17187	2.15	2.27	2.21	2.27 +	.12	2.233	.358
2.100	2.100	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.5	8.00	2	141	302	2.10	2.00	2.00	2.00 -	.10	2.000	.007
3.010	3.010	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	6.7	4.98	1	300	903	3.01	3.01	3.01	3.01 -		3.010	.027
INSURANCE SECTOR					24	9391	27437	INDEX NUMBER : 124.12					CHANGE :- 1.09%	
1.530	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC DIS.	10.8	7.95	109	37876	56937	1.47	1.52	1.49	1.51 +	.04	1.504	.253
5.000	4.800	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	15.3	3.13	3	2000	9656	5.00	4.95	4.80	4.80 -	.20	4.828	.026
2.318	2.200	SHIPPING LINES	9.2	9.22	9	3950	8489	2.20	2.20	2.03	2.17 -	.03	2.149	.057
1.270	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	74	23905	28120	1.12	1.25	1.17	1.24 +	.12	1.210	.478
.930	.700	REAL ESTATE INV.	22.6	2.15	42	34058	23127	.93	1.01	.93	1.01 +	.08	.962	.510
.830	.780	JORDAN INTL.TRAD.	16.6	0.00	2	3700	2886	.78	.78	.78	.78 -		.780	.109
2.050	1.870	MID. EAST HOTELS	79.3	0.00	51	21650	40316	1.87	1.91	1.83	1.84 -	.03	1.861	.425
1.046	.960	AMRA FINCATION	-	0.00	26	20000	19000	.97	1.02	.97	1.02 +	.05	.950	.444
1.960	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	9.8	5.38	66	19780	36211	1.78	1.87	1.80	1.86 +	.08	1.829	.395
.960	.890	UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	8	1550	1467	.92	.97	.93	.95 +	.03	.946	.031
SERVICES SECTOR					385	158451	228153	INDEX NUMBER : 111.37					CHANGE :+ 0.27%	
3.220	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	17.8	3.22	68	58784	182501	3.09	3.19	3.07	3.11 +	.02	3.106	.057
2.900	2.750	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	30.7	0.00	12	20923	59663	2.81	2.90	2.85	2.85 +	.04	2.852	.048
5.550	5.100	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.3	2.95	15	19970	100906	5.10	5.87	5.85	5.85 -	.05	5.053	.025
9.150	8.720	JOR. PETROL.REFINERY	9.2	8.84	95	19999	179007	8.82	9.05	8.85	9.05 +	.23	8.951	.312
2.490	2.280	INDUSTRIAL COMB.ASH.	29.0	0.00	9	1295	2835	2.18	2.28	2.15	2.16 -	.12	2.189	.026
6.950	6.620	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	9.3	3.88	7	7913	51233	6.46	6.50	6.45	6.45 -	.01	6.458	.198
9.550	3.100	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	18.7	5.88	110	34043	114048	3.18	3.40	3.25	3.40 +	.22	3.350	.378
5.300	5.650	JOR.CERAMIC IND.	7.1	6.39	9	1251	7282	5.70	5.80	5.70	5.70 -		5.821	.030
7.200	2.100	JORDAN DAIRY	12.9	7.16	2	249	518	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10 -		2.080	.024
1.820	1.710	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	9.8	5.78	7	42876	73974	1.71	1.77	1.71	1.77 +	.06	1.725	1.319
3.300	3.150	JOR.PAPER CARBRD.	16.4	3.13	3	200	648	3.15	3.20	3.20	3.20 +	.02	3.200	.007
2.680	2.500	GENERAL MINING	6.7	11.45	3	258	681	2.60	2.65	2.62	2.62 +	.02	2.640	.026
1.680	1.400	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	182.2	0.00	10	2550	3724	1.49	1.52	1.46	1.46 -	.05	1.460	.285
6.900	4.350	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	12.0	4.55	44	252884	1078429	4.40	4.62	4.25	4.40 -		4.265	4.215
3.620	3.130	ARAB ALOR.IND.	5.3	11.96	36	8289	27472	3.15	3.37	3.25	3.35 +	.20	3.314	.138
.580	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	-	0.00	222	343300	164461	.48	.51	.46	.50 +	.03	.479	10.463
1.210	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONV.IND.	8.1	8.70	59	43280	49825	1.09	1.19	1.11	1.19 +	.10	1.159	1.861
1.420	1.320	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	18	8000	10948	1.35	1.43	1.36	1.36 +	.01	1.369	.200
.800	.660	NATIONAL INDS.	9.9	8.36	70	34768	23570	.67	.69	.66	.67 -		.678	.379
1.280	1.070	INTERNAT.PETRO.CHEM.	-	0.00	354	187700	236966	1.16	1.33	1.18	1.26 +	.10	1.297	4.692
2.800	2.600	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	70.3	0.00	2	500	1330	2.80	2.66	2.66	2.66 -	.14	2.660	.033
3.330	3.190	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	18.3	0.00	16	10714	33132	3.93	3.33	2.90	3.00 -	.33	3.092	.214
.950	.830	JOR. SHIPBD-CHEM		0.00	20	7300	6519	.86	.90	.89	.90 +	.04	.893	.182
1.580	1.220	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	37.5	0.00	130	28959	54328	1.29	1.47	1.31	1.47 +	.18	1.397	.779
1.350	1.250	KANTNER INVEST.	43.1	8.00	2	200	242	1.25	1.22	1.20	1.20 -	.05	1.210	.018
2.400	1.760	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	5.6	10.82	169	56898	103014	1.81	1.88	1.81	1.85 +	.04	1.840	1.128
1.460	1.140	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	18.1	0.00	348	151610	177896	1.22	1.45	1.27	1.44 (	.21	1.352	1.645
1.160	.950	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	28.2	0.00	172	70000	72447	.98	1.04	.98	1.04 +	.06	1.015	.884
1.880	1.750	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	115.7	0.00	20	26659	45972	1.79	1.81	1.79	1.80 +	.01	1.800	.821
1.220	1.090	INTL. TOBACCO	27.5	0.00	69	36400	62132	1.13	1.17	1.14	1.17 +	.04	1.187	.264
1.240	1.130	UNION CH. & VEG.	28.1	0.00	39	22200	25680	1.13	1.18	1.13	1.14 +	.01	1.153	.637
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR					2139	1458797	2950509	INDEX NUMBER : 104.69					CHANGE :+ 0.62%	
GRAND TOTAL					3022	2367185	4792532	INDEX NUMBER : 136.43					CHANGE :+ 1.74%	

NO. OF DAYS TRADED : 5
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME : JD 958,906
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES : 473,437
DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS : 604

BONDS MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (13/07/1996 - 17/07/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

THIS LAST WEEK HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	B/E	DIV	No. OF CONTRACT	No. OF SHARES EXECUTED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER SHARES
.590	.570	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	20.3	8.00	19	32450	11695	.61	.58	.51	.51 -	.10	.521	.880
.630	.500	JOR.TRADE FAC.	16.8	8.00	51	44200	28612	.65	.67	.63	.63 -	.02	.647	1.052
.690	.580	NATL.COMMER.CENTERS	-	8.00	43	72250	42113	.69	.66	.54	.54 -	.15	.597	1.445
.530	.480	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	-	8.00	53	78287	47010	.58	.61	.57	.60 +	.06	.600	.783
.700	.580	UNION INV. 50%	67.8	8.00	65	104044	22826	.73	.76	.71	.71 -	.02	.219	.473
.510	.480	ARAB FOOD & HOD.	-	8.00	45	22569	13675	.53	.60	.55	.60 +	.07	.581	.642
.520	.480	ARAB INTL.INV.TRU.	-	8.00	16	7760	4196	.52	.56	.52	.56 +	.04	.565	.186
.480	.430	JOR.INDS,MUNER-JEMCO	-	8.00	35	26350	13920	.48	.48	.44	.45 -	.03	.439	1.785
1.370	1.340	NATL. CHLORINE	-	8.00	66	172797	244782	1.40	1.50	1.41	1.44 +	.04	1.417	2.409
.550	.500	NATL. TEXTILE	-	8.00	10	2750	1551	.55	.59	.55	.55 -		.564	.110
.470	.450	NATURAL DYES & MOULDS	-	8.00	12	9850	4523	.47	.47	.43	.45 -	.02	.459	.657
1.040	1.000	UNIVL. METALS	-	8.00	1	12000	12000	1.04	1.00	1.00	1.00 -	.04	1.000	1.200
.820	.660	MIDDLE EAST PHARM. 75%	-	8.00	38	44678	17426	.62	.65	.63	.64 +	.02	.390	.478
.770	.720	JORDAN STEEL	-	8.00	104	105059	80479	.77	.84	.79	.82 +	.05	.823	.760
1.140	1.080	UNION TOBACCO 75%	-	8.00	10	32200	36086	1.15	1.21	1.16	1.21 +	.06	.934	.644
.660	.620	EAST PHARM. 95%	-	8.00	24	11100	8832	.65	.68	.65	.67 +	.02	.218	.211
.640	.580	INDS. ENG.	31.4	8.00	104	136502	67920	.45	.51	.47	.51 +	.06	.496	1.979
.770	.720	INDS. CHEMANTS	-	8.00	44	36600	20791	.78	.84	.80	.82 +	.04	.828	.918
.410	.370	I.TEXTILE MANUF.	-	8.00	3	4550	1911	.44	.42	.41	.42 -	.02	.420	.182
.690	.650	PHARM. SAN. P. CONV.	-	8.00	1	100	66	.69	.66	.66	.66 +	.03	.660	.003
.650	.580	NATL. POULTRY	-	8.00	2	60000	45020	.66	.66	.65	.66 +	.01	.652	.690
.530	.480	MID.EAST COMPLEX	8.3	8.00	113	192650	128016	.56	.71	.57	.71 +	.15	.665	.876
.630	.580	NATL.MULT.IND.KUWAIT	-	8.00	96	62093	42797	.64	.78	.65	.66 +	.02	.670	.210
WD TOTAL					966	1276720	980843							

Royal Jordanian planning to raise capital to JD 222 million

** ROYAL JORDANIAN is currently planning to raise the airline's present JD 70 million capital to JD 222 million. According to board chairman Basel Jardaneh, the increase would be achieved through transferring the JD 100 million debt owed to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company into equity in addition to the JD 12 million of interest and JD 30 million of other debts owed to the treasury. Mr. Jardaneh indicated that this whole process would ease the airline's debt from about JD 450 million to JD 330 million noting that Royal Jordanian's accumulated losses are in excess of JD 230 million.

This procedure, Mr. Jardaneh said, would improve the airline's financial situation and would give it the capability to modernise and upgrade its fleet. General Manager Nader Dahabi has previously announced that the airline intends to sell Tristar aircraft and then re-lease it to be able to save about $40 million and improve profitability. The same method will be applied to the Airbus 310, he added (Al Aswaq).

Jordan Sulpho Chemicals Company plunges into the red despite higher sales

** ALTHOUGH JORDAN Sulpho Chemicals increased sales by 49.2 per cent to JD 7.1 million, the company posted a JD 378,400 loss during 1995. Board chairman Said Muasher told the shareholders that among the negative factors that have affected such a result were the competition from a new local industry, the fluctuation of raw material prices at international markets and attempts by some foreign companies to dump similar products on the local market at below cost prices. Mr. Muasher said interest on loans obtained to finance new equipment and the general situation which prevailed after the Gulf war also contributed to the low result. The companies annual report showed that net shareholders equity dropped by eight per cent to JD 4.33 million at the end of 1995. Total assets stood at JD 9.6 million of which JD 4.99 million were fixed assets. Current liabilities increased by 3.3 per cent (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 19/07/96 19:41

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.4867	0.6465	1.2146	107.85	1.3667	1510.95	1.6666	5.0358
DE Mark	0.6727	-	0.4349	0.8171	72.5	0.9192	1016.17	1.1212	3.3875
GB Sterling	1.5467	1.5467	-	1.8787	167.35	2.1139	2336.68	2.5774	7.7879
CH Franc	0.8232	1.2234	0.5324	-	89.08	1.1252	1243.47	1.3717	4.1447
JP Yen	0.0093	1.3774	0.5986	1.1254	-	1.2657	14.00	154.4200	4.6675
CA Dollar	0.7319	1.0876	0.4731	0.8892	79.01	-	1106.26	1.2197	3.6855
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9831	0.4273	0.0803	1402.92	0.9036	-	11.02	3.3320
NL Guilder	0.6000	1.8519	0.8051	1.5134	134.49	1.7331	1916.67	-	4.8217
FR Franc	0.1986	0.2949	0.1282	24.0976	21.39	0.2710	33.06	33.0600	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	20.30	20.15
Bony	20.30	20.15
Dubai	17.85	17.70
UL Gas	203.00	203.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.3967	0.17239	0.32423	28.7861
KD Dinar	0.7721	1.1488	0.4994	0.9391	83.389
KW Dinar	3.3400	4.97018	2.15936	4.06174	360.62
BH Dinar	2.7700	4.12067	1.79057	3.36781	298.969
CY Pound	2.1661	3.2192	1.3991	2.6344	233.528

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	384.5	385
Silver (oz's)	4.98	5.1
Platinum (oz's)	393.3	394.3
Al (3 Months)	#N/A N/	#N/A N/A
CU (3 Months)	#N/A N/	#N/A N/A
Zinc (3 Months)	#N/A N/	#N/A N/A
Lead (3 Months)	#N/A N/	#N/A N/A
NI (3 Months)	#N/A N/	#N/A N/A

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period C'ncy	- 1 - Month	- 3 - Months	- 6 - Months	- 9 - Months	- 1 - Year
USD	5.12	5.31	5.53	6.00	5.81
GBP	5.56	5.69	5.81	5.94	5.94
JPY	0.50	0.71	0.84	1.06	1.15
DEM	3.19	3.38	3.54	3.57	3.39
FRF	3.59	3.64	3.76	3.82	3.96
CHF	2.76	2.41	2.55	2.62	2.67
ITL	8.68	8.43	8.25	8.12	8.06

Main Equity Indicies

Bourse	Index	Value	Low	High	Pr Cls	% Chng	Chng
NewYork	DOW JONES	5426.45	5408.69	5469.36	5464.18	-0.69	-37.73
Nikkei	NIKKEI 225	21666.43	21666.43	21666.43	21666.43	0.00	0.00
London	FT-SE 100	3710.5	3706.7	3726.9	3693.4	0.46	17.1
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	21666.43	21666.43	21666.43	21666.43	0.00	98.57
Paris	CAC 40	1992.83	1991.25	2023.49	2007.26	-0.72	-14.43
Frankfurt	DAX	2516.9	2507.6	2556.32	2532.7	-0.61	-15.8

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	121.5	Spot
Cocoa ($/t)	1,710	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	365	Spot
Wheat ($/bsh)	3.57	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	23.65	Spot
NTG (c/USG)	0.00	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	3.37	Spot
Corn ($/bsh)	3.37	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.096	1.096
DE Mark	0.4749	0.4773
JP Yen	0.4915	0.4941
FR Franc	0.1402	0.1409
CH Fr.	0.5811	0.5837
NL Guilder	0.4231	0.4252
IT Lira	0.4431	0.4455

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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ATLANTA OLYMPICS '96

Getting better? Maybe, but U.S. team definitely getting old

ATLANTA (AP) — It was 1984. The Olympics were in Los Angeles, and the world was young.

Stars of those Games were mere babes in arms — 23-year-old Carl Lewis, 21-year-old Rebecca Twigg. Mary Decker Slaney was 26, a real old-timer.

With the summer Games returning to America, Lewis, Twigg and Slaney all are back for another shot at gold. And while all are now close to forty something, on this U.S. team they are far from ancient.

In the 12 years between America's Games, the average age of the U.S. Olympic team has jumped from 22 years in to almost 27 years in Atlanta, led by 50-year-old fencer Elaine Cherris.

"That aging process underscores basic changes in Olympic rules and improved training procedures that have allowed athletes to stay eligible and in shape while making a living from their sports.

"To have the chance at a medal again — and at this age, too, — is just too much," said 39-year-old Sinjin Smith, who has made more than $1 million as a dominant player in beach volleyball and is favoured for a gold medal this summer.

The International Olympic Committee was just changing its rules in '84, ending the restrictions on money athletes could make from sports and opening the door to millionaires such as Pete Sampras and the Dream Team.

"It's a great thing to be able to play something for so many years because you love it, and then get some cash," Smith said. "A job? What's that?"

Money comes from sponsorships and pro team contracts. It's also provided by the U.S. Olympic Committee, which has paid up to $ 57,875 each to 2,223 athletes through training and support grants in the last four years.

At the Games, the USOC will award $15,000 for each gold medal, $12,500 for each silver and $10,000 for each bronze won by its athletes. Several individual sports also give medal money.

In addition, the USOC has set up a growing string of training centers where Olympic eligibles can hone their skills in state-of-the-art surroundings.

"That commitment of funding and programmes makes it possible for athletes who might otherwise have retired because of financial difficulties to be here in Atlanta," USOC executive director Dick Schultz said.

Just the fact that the centennial Games are on home ground kept many older athletes in the hunt, too.

"I decided to stay around because the Games are in the United States," said cyclist Jeanne Golay, 34, who had planned to retire after the Barcelona Games. "I was pretty burned out after '92, and the thought of four more years was pretty daunting. But I got to thinking about it and racing before the home crowd — that's a big boost."

As any baby boomer who occasionally jogs or swings a golf club knows, the muscles of youth get creaky in middle age. Yet athletes such as Lewis and 42-year-old cyclist Kent Bostick are in the best shape of their lives through rigorous diet and training.

Lewis, whose body-fat quotient is down to about 4 percent, is lifting weights for the first time, trying to build power and explosiveness. Bostick, relatively chubby at 6 per cent fat, follows an organic diet and rides 300-350 miles (480-560 kms) each week.

Older athletes also are listening to their bodies and heading what they hear.

"My body isn't capable of what it once was. I have to pay more attention to it," said Bruce Baumgartner, seeking a third wrestling gold medal at age 36. "I can't bounce back as fast, my body doesn't recover as fast, so I have to know when to just stop."

For a growing number of older U.S. Olympians, the time to stop competing remains at least a month away.



USA champion swimmer Janet Evans pulls off her goggles after her afternoon practice laps at the Olympic pool in Atlanta (Reuter sphoto)

Norwegian tests positive

ATLANTA (R) — World bronze medallist canoeist Peter Ribe has been thrown off Norway's team for the Atlanta Games after a positive drugs tests, Norwegian Olympic officials said Friday.

Ribe tested positive for the stimulant ephedrine at a competition in the German city of Duisburg in June and faces a three-month ban from the sport which covers the period of the Games which open Friday, officials said. The Norwegian team was due to hold a news conference later Friday to give more details about the case.

The abuse of ephedrine is nebulous since athletes in the past have claimed they were using the drug as a cold cure. There is evidence that it has been used in the past as an anorexic agent.

Elaborate menus fail to excite Chinese taste buds

ATLANTA (R) — Surrounded by mountains of steak, bottomless troughs of fresh salad and more than 2,500 coconut custard pies, Chinese Olympic competitors are going hungry.

Despite the cornucopia of food provided at Atlanta's Olympic village, team officials said the elaborate menus designed to fuel athletes to new triumphs were getting poor reviews from the choosy Chinese.

"The diet here, quite frankly, is not suited to us," said chief team spokesman Yan Pingquan. "Westerners might like it but our athletes are finding it very difficult to adapt.

"We are encouraging them to eat but they don't like the food. If this continues we are worried that it might begin to affect their health and performance."

Yan said the athletes' precisely-tuned physiques were suffering from the strange diet and unaccustomed heat.

"People come back and say they have no appetite. For an athlete, this is very bad," he said.

Chinese officials have asked that the air conditioning be switched off in their rooms to head off the danger of colds caused by frequent temperature changes. "We just tell them to open the window," Yan said.

The food question, however, is a tougher nut to crack. While team members have made forays to buy canned goods and instant noodles, the sheer number of hungry Chinese is daunting.

"How can we feed hundreds of hungry athletes this way? It doesn't make sense," he said.

Olympic village food organisers were surprised by the Chinese complaints, which come despite a village larder stocked to bursting to feed more than 10,000 athletes and officials during the Games.

Chef Louis Ferretti, the head of the operation, said Chinese-style dishes such as "oriental turkey chow-mein" and stir-fry were regular items on the menu — although prepared by American rather than Chinese chefs.

"Most people have been exceptionally happy with the food," he said. "If the Chinese had complained to us we would certainly have taken steps to accommodate them."

Dr. Ann Grandjean, a nutritional consultant to the Olympic village dining hall, guessed that nerves and stress were the real reason for the rumbling Chinese stomachs.

"With pre-competition jitters, athletes begin to get antsy and irritable," she said. "They are young and probably just want a taste of home."

Struggling Agassi promises to bounce back

ATLANTA (AFP) — Andre Agassi promised Thursday he will bounce back from a wretched season when the Olympic tennis tournament gets underway here next week.

The flamboyant American has won only one tournament all year — taking the Lipton title after Goran Ivanisevic withdrew from the final through injury — and made early exits at Wimbledon and the French Open.

Asked about his poor performances, which include being booed out of the Monte Carlo Open, the former world number one quipped:

"Thanks for noticing.

"I certainly still feel I have the confidence that in every event, if I get the right momentum, I can be fighting for the title.

"I've struggled more than I would have liked to this year. But when you do it week after week, year after year, you realise there are things to be concerned about and things not to be concerned about."

"Being here is a great moment in my life and I want to make it everything that it can be. And that means going out there and busting my ass to win it, that's the bottom line."

Agassi also confessed to a special pride at being a second generation Olympian. His father Mike was a member of the Iranian boxing team at the 1948 and 1952 Olympics.

"There's something heart-touching accomplishment to be here as a second generation. My father is proud if not prouder of this than anything else I've done so far."

Monica Seles was clearly delighted at being on the U.S. Olympic team.

"I'm very excited to be here," she said. "I can't wait for the competition to start and just to play my best, I've been looking forward to this for more than a year and a half."

She admitted to still being troubled by a shoulder injury, but said: "It won't get better without surgery. I've just got to play the best I can, like I've been doing all year."

Her excitement was shared by beaten Wimbledon finalist MaliVai Washington, still touched by the huge support he enjoyed from the British crowds and well wishers from around the world.

"I always get a lot of support wherever I go, but now it's getting bigger," he said. "It's wonderful."

Coach Tom Gullikson said the men's team replacement for Pete Sampras, who has withdrawn through injury, should be known later in the day – but was expecting it to be Todd Martin.

Women's coach Billie Jean King, whose squad also includes Gigi Fernandez, Mary Jo Fernandez, Chanda Rubin and Lindsay Davenport, said: "We do have very good chances. All of the players know it's a privilege to be here and they're proud to be representing their country."

The only questionmark is over the match fitness of Rubin, who has a stress fracture of her hand.



Andre Agassi (left) and Monica Seles, members of the USA Olympic tennis team, point at reporters during a press conference in Atlanta (Reuters photo)

Shaq signs richest sports contract with Lakers

ATLANTA (AFP) — Anfernee Hardaway was stunned to discover that when the Olympics here are over, so are his days as a basketball teammate of Shaquille O'Neal.

The 2.16m center signed the richest contract in sports history Thursday, a $120 million, seven-year deal to leave the National Basketball Association's Orlando Magic and join the Los Angeles Lakers.

"It is kind of devastating," said Hardaway, an Orlando guard who is also a member of the U.S. Dream Team. "It's just one of those things. You have to get the team to get over him and try to do your best next season."

The Magic reached the NBA semi-finals this season before falling to Michael Jordan and the eventual champion Chicago Bulls.

Without O'Neal, Hardaway fears the worst.

"I don't think we can win over an entire season without a guy like Shaquille," he said. "I just have to get with my teammates and get ready for the season and play as hard as I can."

Moving to the Western Conference club will give O'Neal more games against the NBA's top centers, including Olympic teammates David Robinson and Hakeem Olajuwon.

The dizzying amounts, including $85 million for Gary Payton to stay in Seattle for seven years, left Dream Team forward Karl Malone shaking his head.

The way things are going, people who don't do anything are getting a lot of money. He deserves it. More power to him. It's great L.A. did it. They swallowed really hard to do that."

O'Neal's agent, Leonard Armato, was not worried about the dollars for such a landmark deal. He had the Magic and Lakers in a bidding war.

U.S. Olympic coach Lenny Wilkens said the unprecedented salary run cannot and will not continue, for the overall sake of the league.

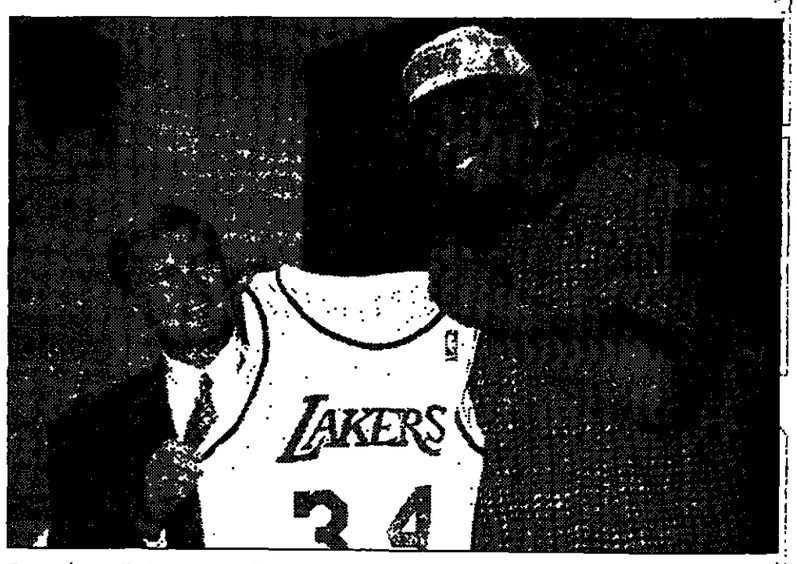
"It's whatever the market will bear," he said. "You won't see this every year. I don't think the NBA is going to leap over a cliff. This was a great opportunity for players and they took advantage."

And the players certainly have no complaints.

Wilkens said the signing turmoil has not affected the Dream Team.

"We talked about staying focused and letting the people who represent them take care of that," he said. "These young men dealt with it tremendously and it has not taken away from our preparation."

The only free agent remaining among the U.S. Olympians is Reggie Miller, who has been in lengthy negotiations to stay with Indiana.



Los Angeles Lakers general manager Jerry West (left) and Shaquille O'Neal show off O'Neal's new Lakers jersey at a press conference in Atlanta. O'Neal reportedly signed a seven year deal worth $120 million to play center for the team next year (Reuters photo)

Computer foul-up causes red faces amongst officials

ATLANTA (AFP) — The luck of the draw took on a new technological meaning Thursday when a computer error resulted in the Olympic table tennis men's singles groupings being changed three times.

Embarrassed officials from the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) looked on helplessly as the large screen kept going blank because the computer read Trinidadian Dexter St Louis' name twice. As a result Kazeem Nosiru of Nigeria was omitted from the original draw.

"It was something to do with the formula — the number was read twice," explained a red-faced Colin Clemett, the technical delegate from the ITTF. "We had a trial run yesterday and everything went perfectly."

Most of the coaches and managers at the draw laughed at the foul-up but the North Koreans questioned why their singles player Li Gun-Sang kept popping up in different groups.

The final draw placed him alongside 1988 Olympic champion Yoo Nam-Kyu of South Korea and the clash between the two countries, who are technically still at war, dismayed the North Koreans.

"A human should have done the draw — this was not right," said team leader Ra U-Chae. "How could this happen?"

Communist North Korea, a hermit state where millions of people are surviving on small bowls of rice, missed the deadline for Olympic participation but after overtures from the International Olympic Committee agreed to compete.

Their table tennis team was amongst the world's best in the early 1990s but their current strength is unknown as they did not compete in the 1994 Asian Games or the 1995 World Championships.

When the men's singles draw was eventually finalised it presented a relatively straightforward route into the knockout stages for the main contenders. The top player qualifies from the 16 four-player groups.

TODAY AT

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Layla Elwi...in

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(Arabic)

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Atlanta boasts record number of women athletes

ATLANTA (R) —Women were first allowed into the Olympics in 1900 to play golf and tennis. At Atlanta's Centenary Games, one in three of the athletes is a woman.

Banned on pain of death from the ancient Olympics where men ran naked, women were at least allowed to watch when the modern Olympics were relaunched in 1896 in Athens.

A Greek woman marathon runner posted better trial times than many of the men but was still banned from running.

"The Olympic committee deserves censure because it was discourteous to refuse entry to a lady," complained the Greek newspaper Akropolis.

By the year 1900, they were playing golf and tennis in Paris and at the 1904 games in St. Louis, boxing was even included as an exhibition sport for women.

Just 15 women competed in 1900. In Atlanta the figure has risen to 3,779 compared to 6,582 men. That is 1,000 more women than in Barcelona in 1992 and a record high.

But it has been a long, hard climb to recognition with women athletes arguing that the battle is still not won today.

Dual Barcelona gold medallist Gwen Torrence said women will never be treated as equals.

"We've come a long way but we have a long way to go. It's going to be very difficult to get a white European man (promoting track meetings) to pay women money like they pay men," she told the Atlanta Journal.

But the Olympics of the the last 20 years have been peppered with women stars — gymnasts Olga Korbut and Nadia Comaneci transformed the sport and sprinter Florence Griffith Joyner brought glamour, elegance and speed to the track.

At the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, Morocco's Nawal El Moutawakel became the first woman from an Islamic country to capture gold.

Her 400-metres hurdle race was televised live on Moroccan television in the early hours of the morning. King Hassan decreed that all girls born that day should be called Nawal.

Just over 20 years ago, U.S. sprinter Evely Ashford ran on the boys highs school team as there was no girls squad.

Her daughter has a whole new world of opportunity, prompting Ashford to reflect: "Things are better. Maybe it doesn't matter if people know who opened the door as long as opportunity is there."

But perhaps the medal for the most bizarre case of equal opportunities should go to Stella Walsh. The 100 metres winner at the 1932 Los Angeles Games represented Poland because of the lack of support for women athletes in the United States.

In 1980, she was shot dead in a robbery. The autopsy revealed that Walsh was a man.



The U.S. Dream Team field questions from a packed press room during their conference at the INFORUM in Atlanta. The Dream Team as well as all the other basketball competitors will begin play on July 20. From Left to Right at tables. Row 1 Mitch Richmond (guard), Scottie Pippen (forward), David Robinson (centre), Coach Lenny Wilkens, Anfernee Hardaway (guard), Grant Hill (forward), Charles Barclay (forward). Row 2, Hakeem Olajuwon (centre), Shaquille O'Neal (centre), John Stockton (guard), Karl Malone (forward), Reggie Miller (guard) (Reuters photo)

U.S. Dream Team carefree

ATLANTA (R) — The U.S. Dream Team, with no credible opposition in the Olympic basketball tournament to worry about, had a barrel of laughs at their first Atlanta press conference.

Irrepressible power forward Charles Barkley was the clown prince of the event, mugging, wisecracking and even playing an imaginary violin as centre David Robinson managed to find many good things to say about Olympic teams the Americans demolished in exhibition matches ahead of the games.

But another power forward, Karl Malone, got the longest laughs, building them like a nightclub comedian.

A scandinavian reporter, admitting he was "new to this business," asked Malone "why do you get two points for a basket." His meaning was obscure, but Malone answered him literally. "It's the rules of the game, my man."

As laughter percolated around the packed theatre, Malone added: "That's a tough question."

Malone went on to explain that there is also such a thing as a three-point shot. "If you shoot behind the three-point line, you get three.

"Why? Because that's how we do it over here in America," he concluded triumphantly.

Actually, that's how they do it most everywhere.

Another reporter interrupted the proceedings by shouting that a security guard was ejecting him for no reason. Barkley, eager to get things over with, shouted back: "Get out. I want to go play golf." Officials sent someone to talk to the reporter, and he was allowed to stay.

Even the straight-arrow Robinson got in some gentle mockery. When a Peruvian reporter asked his opinion about Peru's basketball players, Robinson asked: "Do they have a team?" not at the Olympics, certainly.

Coach Lenny Wilkens thoroughly enjoyed it all, sharing smiles and raised eyebrows with his players and making the joke announcement that Barkley had been named the team's sergeant at arms— the most unlikely enforcer of anybody's rules of order.

Barkley was asked several times about his current feelings about Australia's point guard Shane Heal, whom he shoved and argued with in an exhibition game, but then hugged afterwards.

"He's a talkative little fella," said Barkley.

His final explanation: "I'm very consistent. I try to hit everybody."

The atmosphere was a contrast with that surrounding the regal, some said arrogant, original Dream Team in Barcelona. "We had a more serious team in '92," said Barkley. "This team here is fun, we keep everybody loose."

Wilkens agreed that the Barcelona team "was a little more serious" but added: "I like the way these young men are responding. I think if you do something, why not enjoy it? Because if you enjoy it, you're going to do it better."

Maldives swimmer trains in tropical lagoon

ATLANTA (R) — The only Olympic swimmer from the Maldives has done most of his training in a lagoon because tourists hog the islands' swimming pools.

Moosa Nazim, who will be competing in the 50 metres freestyle, said he only enjoys the luxury of pool training in the immediate run-up to a major competition.

"All the swimming pools in our country are in holiday resorts. They are too expensive for our Olympic committee and in any case the tourists complain when we use them," he said.

Nazim, who has a modest personal best of 28.4 seconds, said the country's swimmers had to make do with a lagoon in the capital male, where a breakwater gave them protection of a sort."The water's usually clean and calm but after the monsoon it is full of coconuts and fallen branches."

He is one of six athletes who will be representing the tiny Indian Ocean islands.

Nazim is typical of athletes from the smaller nations who, amid all the brash and unashamed commercialism which has taken over the Atlanta Games, are perhaps the last representatives of the dwindling Olympic spirit.

Another is Sao Tome and Principe sprinter Osvaldo Barbosa, who has trained for the men's 110 metre hurdles by jumping over piles of boxes or improvised barriers made from bamboo.

His country's Olympic committee, which like Cuba lost an important source of cash with the break-up of the former Soviet Union, cannot afford to buy proper hurdles.

"We have enormous difficulties," said his trainer Gervasio De Pina. "We can't even afford to give him a cup of milk. Imagine an athlete not drinking milk."

"They (the government) want our athletes to get results but they don't realise that you can't get results without helping them." Barbosa, 19, said he trained on a dirt track at Sao Tome's national stadium.

But, undeterred by this and the fact that his medal chances are as remote as the country itself, he said it was all worth it for the honour of representing his country on its first appearance at the Olympics.

"This is a dream which I never thought would be possible," he said.

A contribution from an International Olympic Committee fund has enabled Sao Tome, a group of islands off the west coast of Africa, to make their first trip to the Games with a squad of four athletes.

Equally laid-back is Mauritanian sprinter Ould Nourdine, whose presence at the Olympics may have cost the west African desert country defeat in a soccer World Cup qualifying match.

Nourdine has scored three times in 12 appearances for Mauritania's soccer team but did not play against Burkina Faso in the tie in which they were knocked out because he was training for the Olympics.

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Cacharel now introduces its new perfume EAU D'EDEN in the Middle East and the Gulf regions: a new dimension in Cacharel perfume collection.

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EAU D'EDEN upsets the traditional perception of perfumery through a powerful communication which evokes floral feminity, beauty and freshness of dew in a dazzle of water and light.

Cacharel chooses Jean Paul Goude, creator of magical images, to direct EAU D'EDEN advertising film. It tells the story of the birth of the day when dark becomes light, when roses become woman...

EAU D'EDEN is launched in two sizes 50 ml and 100 ml Eau De Toilette spray, and a 150 ml Deodorant butane.

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Jewish settlers club Palestinians, journalists

QARYOUT, West Bank (R) — Jewish settlers broke the nose of a Palestinian woman and clubbed two foreign news cameramen on Friday in clashes with Arabs protesting land seizures in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, witnesses said.

Palestinian witnesses said the clash began when about 200 Arabs carrying banners marched onto land they said settlers had taken from Qaryout village near Shilo Jewish settlement in the northern West Bank.

They said the Palestinians began pulling down a fence and set fire to dry brush. Settlers armed with clubs and sub-machineguns arrived and began stoning and clubbing the Palestinians who threw stones in turn at the settlers.

At least one settler wildly fired his Uzi sub-machinegun in the air during the unrest but wounded no one.

"Since this new Likud government, these settlers feel empowered. This land is our life. If they keep this up, our lives will be meaningless," said protester Mushtaq Mohammed, referring to the May 29 election of hardline Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

Israeli soldiers, who had escorted the protesters as they marched along a main road, stood by after the Palestinians left the road and only intervened once the clash began.

Palestinians said the soldiers tried to disperse them with teargas but did nothing to the settlers.

Israeli authorities said they were checking the report.

At one point a settler clubbed WTN television cameraman Abdul Rahman Khabisa in the legs and then, as Mr. Khabisa turned to walk away, a settler clubbed him on the back of the head. He fell to the ground. Settlers also clubbed Associated Press cameraman Abdul Rahim Qusini in the back.

Both men were taken to hospital in Israel.

Reuters television filmed the clubbing of Mr. Khabisa as well as men carrying Fatmeh Al Boom, a 76-year-old Palestinian woman, from the scene as she clutched her nose streaming with blood. The men said settlers had beaten Ms. Boom. Hospital officials in Nablus later said Ms. Boom's nose was broken.

The settlers smashed the windscreens and rear windows of 14 cars owned by Arabs, Palestinians said.

Palestinians said the settlers were stealing land from Qaryout village, fencing off about 153 hectares (375 acres).

Asked why the Palestinians had set fire to one of the fields, Khamis Al Hamad, one of the demonstrators, said dead underbrush was burned every summer.

He added: "It shows this is their property."

About 130,000 Jews live in settlements scattered among the two million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip occupied by Israel in 1967. Some of the territory has been handed over by Israel to Palestinian self-rule since 1994 under an interim peace deal.

The area of Friday's unrest is still under Israeli control.

Mr. Netanyahu, who opposes trading occupied land for peace, has said Israelis have the right to settle anywhere in the occupied lands. The previous government, while expanding settlements around Jerusalem, had frozen new settlement building and the expansion of peripheral settlements.



WTN cameraman Abdul Rahman Khabisa is tended by a Palestinian nurse in an ambulance before being evacuated to hospital Friday. Mr. Khabisa was attacked and beaten by Israeli settlers while filming clashes between Palestinian villagers and settlers from nearby Shilo over land confiscation (Reuters photo)

COLUMN 8

Major: Diana still has important public role

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major said Princess Diana would continue to play an important role in public life despite her divorce from Prince Charles and the loss of her royal title. He told Independent Television station ITN it was wrong to suggest Princess Diana would disappear from view after she announced she was resigning as patron of more than 100 charities to concentrate on her personal life. "She is a member of the royal family and she will remain a member...So she is going to have an important role in our public life as far ahead as we can see," he said.

Royal stalker fined by British court

LONDON (R) — A German doctor who was arrested for carrying a placard which bore insulting comments about Britain's Queen Elizabeth was fined £100 ($150) by a London court. Klaus Wagner, 37, who believes the queen is possessed by the devil and should be replaced by Princess Diana, was found guilty of insulting behaviour and displaying a sign which could cause distress. During a ceremonial parade in London last month Mr. Wagner was seen holding a placard which referred to the queen as "Elizardbeast" and linked her to the devil.

Massage improves baby's well-being

LONDON (R) — Massaging babies helps them sleep, increases their alertness and improves their overall sense of well-being, a U.S. doctor who specialises in touch research said. "Baby massage has remarkable benefits for both babies and their parents...It has also been linked to additional health benefits such as relieving colic and boosting the immune system," Tiffany Field said. Dr. Field, founder of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, said infants up to six months old who were massaged for 15 minutes a day for two weeks took only nine minutes to fall asleep compared to 22 minutes before.

Rome gives pets a holiday deal

ROME (R) — Cats and dogs are to get to see the sights of Rome under a scheme announced by the city that will allow tourists to stay in hotels with their pets. The project, to which 25 hotels have signed up, is part of a drive by the city council to discourage Italians from abandoning their pets when they go on their summer holiday. Tourism officer Francesco Carducci Artenisio said the scheme should boost Rome's image as it prepares for a huge influx of tourists in the year 2000, the start of the third millennium.

Actor Robert Downey Jr. arrested again

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Robert Downey Jr., who already faces drug charges, was arrested again on suspicion of substance abuse after he was found passed out in a stranger's home in Malibu, police said. The arrest came just hours after the district attorney's office filed felony charges of drug possession and misdemeanour counts of drunk driving and possession of a concealed weapon against the 31-year-old actor stemming from an incident last month. Downey faces charges of trespassing and being under the influence of a controlled substance.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Syria's Assad visits tomb of brother

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad on Friday visited the tomb of his elder brother Ismael Ali Al Assad north of Damascus, officials said. Mr. Assad had led the funeral procession on Thursday — the day his brother died — in the coastal town of Qardaha, birth place of the Syrian leader, some 320 kilometres north of Damascus. Officials said Mr. Assad, 65, his brothers and members of his family received citizens who came to offer their condolences. Ismael's age and the cause of his death were not published.

Eritrea frees 68 Egyptian fishermen

CAIRO (AP) — Sixty-eight Egyptian fishermen arrested earlier this month off the Eritrean coast returned home Friday. The men, who had left the Egyptian port of Suez last month, were detained in the southern Red Sea after apparently crossing into Eritrea's territorial waters, officials said. Egyptians have often run afoul of authorities in Libya, Yemen and Eritrea for fishing in their territorial waters. In April, Yemen released 17 Egyptians arrested for fishing off its coast.

Russia urges new Arab-Israeli talks

MOSCOW (R) — Russia called on Friday for the resumption of Arab-Israeli peace talks, saying any delay could provide opportunities for extremists to set back the process. Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk said after talks with senior Palestinian official Mahmoud Abbas that they had agreed progress towards peace had to be on the basis of the 1991 Madrid conference and the principle of land-for-peace. They said in a joint communique that agreements which had already been reached had to be put into effect. "I am categorically against a pause or delay in the talks process...It is a chance for extremists to try to turn things back in the Middle East process, to impose the language of force, of terror and extremism," Mr. Posuvalyuk told a news conference.

2 Sudanese arrested for organ-trafficking

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian authorities have broken up a human-organ trafficking ring led by two Sudanese who "exploited destitute Egyptians" and sold their organs to rich individuals in Gulf Arab states, a newspaper here said Friday. Mohammad Al Amin Ahmed, 25, and Mohammad Agab Mohammad, 45, recruited poor Egyptians and bought their organs for $10,000, taking a 20 per cent commission, the government daily Al Akhbar reported. The "donors" passed medical tests which were faxed to rich Gulf residents to assure a tissue match.

Bathing suits banned in Egyptian resort

CAIRO (AP) — No shorts or bathing suits will be allowed in the streets of one of Egypt's main Mediterranean resorts. The governor fears too much skin would offend the morals and traditions of the bedouin population around Marsa Matrouh. Gov. Abdul Moneim Said asked hotels and youth camps to publicise the decision in Arabic, French and English so that tourists would be aware of it, Al Akhbar newspaper said Friday. For the conservative nomads of Marsa Matrouh, 435 kilometres northwest of Cairo, wearing revealing clothes, such as shorts or bathing suits, is considered immodest behavior.



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Hizbollah, Israel to start prisoner swap Sunday

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's interior minister said Friday an oft-delayed German-mediated bodies-and-prisoner exchange between Hizbollah and Israel is expected to take place on Sunday.

"The mediation efforts are taking place in a positive atmosphere. The results will emerge within 48 hours and the mission is expected to be crowned with success," Michel Murr told reporters after meeting with Bernd Schmidbauer, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's intelligence adviser.

Mr. Schmidbauer later set Sunday as the deadline for the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, or Party of God, to hand over the remains of two Israeli soldiers for the remains of Shiite Muslim prisoners held by Israel along with the remains of guerrillas killed in clashes, government sources said. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

Mr. Schmidbauer, who has negotiated the exchange over three months of secret talks, arrived from Damascus for the 45-minute meeting with Mr. Murr.

He later left aboard a German government jet for the Syrian capital accompanied by two aides and a six-man German security team.

Mr. Murr said the prisoner exchange will take place under Lebanese government supervision.

Government sources said Mr. Schmidbauer was scheduled to land at Beirut airport at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Sunday to take custody of the remains of the two Israelis at 10 a.m. (0700 GMT) and then fly to Israel.

Simultaneously, Israel will free more than 100 Shiite prisoners through gateways on the boundary of the border enclave it occupies in South Lebanon.

Remains of several Hizbollah guerrillas killed in attacks in the enclave, which Israel calls a "security zone," will be repatriated the same way. They have been readied in coffins at the Israeli border town of Rosh Haniqra.

The sources did not disclose the exact number of prisoners to be freed or remains to be handed over. But earlier Friday, the conservative Al Liwa daily quoted Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bweiz as saying 135 Lebanese will be freed.

Hizbollah says some 100 guerrillas have been killed in South Lebanon over the last 10 years. Most of them were buried in a cemetery in northern Israel.

Mr. Bweiz had expected the swap to start Friday with a first stage of "bodies for bodies." There was no explanation for the delay, the fourth this week amid disputes over numbers and efforts by both sides to improve the conditions.

On Thursday, the German team positively identified the remains of the Israeli soldiers, who were captured in South Lebanon in 1986 and later died in captivity.

The team, which included a forensic expert and a coroner, made the identification on the basis of dental charts and other records provided by Israel.

The bodies of privates Rahamim Alsheikh and American-born Yosef Fink were exhumed from a secret burial site some distance from Beirut on Thursday.

In a development apparently unrelated to the exchange, but which could help improve the political climate, Israel Thursday released a Lebanese newsman it had held for more than a month on suspicion of links with the Hizbollah.

Ali Dhiya, 44, a freelance reporter for the French news agency, Agence France Presse, was detained June 13.

Although Mr. Bweiz said all Lebanese prisoners held by Israel would be freed, government sources said they did not expect the swap to include Shiite leaders Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid and Mustafa Dirani.

Sheikh Obeid was kidnapped from his South Lebanon home by Israeli commandos in 1989, Mr. Dirani from the Bekaa Valley in a similar operation in 1994. Both were apparently abducted in connection with Israeli efforts to determine the fate of missing servicemen.

Israel has demanded firm word on the fate of another missing serviceman, air force navigator Capt. Ron Arad, in exchange for the release of Sheikh Obeid and Mr. Dirani.

Capt. Arad's F-4 Phantom was shot down over South Lebanon on Oct. 17, 1986. Israel contends he is held by Iran, Hizbollah's patron.

In addition to Capt. Arad, Fink and Alsheikh, three other Israeli servicemen, Zacharia Baumel, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz, are missing. They disappeared June 11, 1982, the fifth day of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Israeli officials believe they are dead.

U.S. presses for new African candidate to replace Ghali

UNITED NATIONS (USIA) — U.S. officials are calling the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) qualified endorsement of a second term for U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali the "high water mark" in the 73-year-old Egyptian's reelection campaign.

But remaining steadfast behind Dr. Ghali "will destroy the chances of Africa to retain the secretary-general post for a second term," one official cautioned. Dr. Ghali's continued pursuit of this office can only harm the United Nations," the official said.

The drama over who will head the United Nations for the next five years, starting in January 1997, has entered a second stage as governments begin to make their positions known on the issue of whether to support a second term for Dr. Ghali.

"Our general feeling is that there were two summits after our statement... in Lyon (at the G-7 summit) it barely came up. We were not heavily pressured by the other leaders to change our minds, and the OAU summit declaration was the minimum of what we would have expected," said a U.S. official who declined to be named.

The diplomatic flap at the world organisation began when the United States let it be known in June that it had lost confidence in Dr. Ghali's ability and dedication to carry out necessary fiscal and managerial reforms and would veto his candidacy when the Security Council takes up the issue. Hours later Dr. Ghali, who had declared he was a one-term secretary-general when he assumed office in 1991, announced that he had decided to seek a second term "in view of the strong endorsement from member states."

The U.S. official pointed out to journalists in July that only 18 of the more than 50 African leaders at the annual summit in Cameroon pushed through the "declaration" supporting the continued tenure of an African in the top U.N. post and "recommending the candidature" of Dr. Ghali for the job. After that African effort, Dr. Ghali's campaign "will begin to collapse," the U.S. official predicted.

U.S. officials point out that several key heads of state at the African summit objected to the declaration.

"We understand (the declaration) to mean the OAU is to begin consulting with all of the Africans since all of them didn't participate in this decision on the candidacy of Boutros Ghali. We understand that the foreign ministers are of the understanding that if in the course of that consultation it is determined that he cannot get a consensus recommendation — which he does not now have — that people will begin to push for other options," the official said.

"We would expect over time that as relevant countries understand that to pursue a Boutros Ghali second term — because of his unwillingness to step down — will only have the effect of destroying any chance for Africa to have a second term," the official said.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright and other senior officials have been personally explaining the U.S. position to governments around the world.

"The phrase that we have used at the head-of-state level and down is that "this decision is irrevocable," said the U.S. official.

"The bottom line (essential point) is that we keep reiterating to those who don't understand our political system and think that somehow if this is postponed until after (the U.S. presidential elections in) November we would change our minds that we are not going to change our minds," the official said.

"Once that is clear, then we can move on to have quiet consultations with other countries about who would be the right person," the official said.

Although Clinton administration officials have denied the speculation, some diplomatic observers have continued to feel that the possibility of Dr. Ghali's reelection was becoming a foreign policy issue in the upcoming U.S. presidential election and thus pushed the Clinton administration to make a very early announcement on the post and thus remove one aspect of the U.N. issue from the campaign.

But U.S. officials maintain that the precedent-setting announcement reflected domestic, partisan politics only in the sense that the administration is concerned about getting hundreds of millions of dollars for the United Nations from an increasingly critical Republican Congress.

U.S. officials also have continually stressed that they have no candidates in mind.

Jordan witnesses 2nd mass wedding

AMMAN (AFP) — Five Jordanian couples tied the knot Friday in the second mass wedding staged by a charitable committee, designed to overcome financial and social hindrances before marriage in this conservative country.

Unlike traditional wedding pageants known to cost thousands of dinars at five-star hotels, the collective matrimony was celebrated smoothly by families of the five couples at a school auditorium.

More than two thousand invitees danced to the music at the two-hour austerity party in which soft drinks and pieces of cake were offered.

The organisers, "Emaculate Society," chaired by Islamist Senate member Abdul Latif Arabiyat, had issued invitation cards in the name of five couples and their respective parents.

The first collective wedding was held by the same society on Aug. 10, when four couples entered the wedlock in a similar low-profile festivity, which cost some $2,000 donated by private enterprises.

Established in 1993, the Emaculate Society plans to break the shackles that keep alarming numbers of young men and women out of wedlock due to hefty financial burdens amid spiralling prices. Ever since, the society offered marriage seekers concessional loans to more than 200 couples.

The per capita income for average Jordanian is estimated at $1,000 per year.

According to a study by the University of Jordan, roughly 60 per cent of women aged between 20 and 25 are single whereas celibacy rates amongst men between 25 and 30 are estimated at 45 per cent.

Two Hungarians arrested in Morocco for drug trafficking

RABAT (R) — Morocco has arrested two Hungarians it said were involved in an international drugs smuggling network, the interior ministry said on Friday.

The ministry's anti-narcotics commission said the police arrested a Hungarian man and a woman after they discovered 554 kilogrammes of cannabis carefully packed and hidden in the boot of their car in the northern town of Tetouan.

Two Moroccans were also arrested, it said in a statement.

Further investigations showed that those arrested were part of an international supply network some of whose members had been arrested in Spain in June.

Police were still looking for other foreigners and Moroccans belonging to the same ring, the statement said.

Morocco launched a crackdown on drug smuggling this year, vowing to eradicate the illegal trade which has marred its image abroad.